

The Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development

An initiative of the Federal Government



Building our future.

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR AUSTRIA.

A Sustainable Future for Austria

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Development**

PREFACE

The concept of sustainable development is closely associated with the United Nations' "Brundtland Commission for Environment and Development". In its 1987 report, the Commission criticised: *The balance sheets of our generation may still show profits – but we shall leave the losses behind for our children. We are today borrowing our "environmental capital" from future generations without any intention or hope of ever repaying them.* To counter this, the Brundtland Report introduced the concept of sustainable development. *Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The demand that this development be "enduring" applies to every nation and all humans.*

However, sustainable development is more than just a modern slogan: It is a new, long-term concept of environmental, economic, employment and social policy that goes far beyond any government terms of office and national borders. An intact environment, economic prosperity and social solidarity should be the common goals of global, national and local politics in order to guarantee quality of life for all humans in the long term. Sustainable development is the answer to the challenge of controlling social, economic and ecological processes with responsibility. Therefore it is necessary to analyse target conflicts and to develop options for overcoming them.

The Austrian federal government associates the political design objectives for a sustainable quality of life, environment and location in Austria with the responsibility for development on a global level. Ever since the World Summit for Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, where Agenda 21, the sustainable agenda for the 21st century, was adopted and the Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed, Austria has been committed to implementation of the principles of sustainable development. It aims to implement the principle established in Rio, "Think globally – act locally", with significant measures in Austria, an active role in international treaties, and partnership with the developing countries. The aim thereby is not so much to solve acute problems, but rather to stop or reverse unsustainable trends in order to guarantee an ecologically, economically and socially successful future.

The Austrian federal government views this strategy as a significant contribution towards the new strategic goal of the European Union that was adopted by the heads of state and government in Lisbon (March 2000). According to this goal, the Union should *become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economic area in the world – an economic area that is capable of achieving sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and with greater social solidarity* by the year 2010. In Austria's view, a more concrete definition of this goal is required in order to achieve a sustainable, enduring and long-term

development – and this more concrete definition was adopted at the Council level in December 2001. Accordingly, the European Union *is to become an area of the world with an economic structure characterized by efficiency of resources, in which the citizens can enjoy a high quality of life and in which the economic and social development takes the environmental capacity into account.*

The concrete design and above all a successful implementation of the political concept of a sustainable Austria cannot be achieved by decree or by experts behind closed doors. There cannot be a sustainable society without social communication on sustainability. Understanding, acceptance and approval of the challenges, goals and opportunities associated with this concept, as well as the approaches for solving everyday problems are prerequisite, if the people concerned are to become involved and the target groups are to become partners.

The federal government adopted the Austrian Strategy for a Sustainable Development in April 2002.

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Challenge and Basis

Building Our Future: From the Green Book to the Strategy

The Green Book “A Sustainable Future for Austria” was prepared by a strategy group consisting of representatives from various ministries and experts appointed by the social partners in spring 2001 in the lead-up to the European Council Meeting in Gothenburg. As the next major milestone, the “Austrian Strategy for a Sustainable Development” based on this Green Book has meanwhile been prepared in a dialogue with all the relevant social groups. Compared with the Green Book, the intended goals were structured more clearly and quantified wherever possible, the implementation process was described in more detail, and key issues (e.g. education, innovation, international responsibility) were emphasized more strongly. The Austrian Sustainability Strategy was prepared by a working group of about 40 representatives from the ministries, provinces and municipalities, the social partners, interest groups and NGO platforms, accompanied and moderated by a professional team. The main focus of the work was on discussing and formulating concrete principles, defining an efficient and transparent implementation process, and defining indicators for measuring progress. In a broadly designed parallel feedback process, any groups of people and institutions not represented in the working group had an opportunity to contribute their suggestions for the Austrian Sustainability Strategy. Existing networks and a number of events were also used. Furthermore, a structured survey was conducted among Austrian researchers and international experts, which provided additional impulses and contributions for the design of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy. The Austrian Sustainability Strategy is structured in three major sections:

- The section “**Challenge and Basis**” illustrates the most important trends that run counter to a sustainable development and a model for a sustainable Austria with thirteen basic principles, which takes account of the specific situation in Austria. In addition, reference is made to the preservation of sound public finances as a basis for sustainable development.
- The section “**Fields of Action**” contains the five key objectives for each of the four fields of action “quality of life”, “business location”, “living spaces” and “international responsibility”, whereby the achievement of these key objectives is prerequisite for a change of direction and a sustainable development. Each of these key objectives includes a description of the current problem background, the concrete wording of the targets, and approaches for achieving them. A number of indicators are assigned to each of the four fields of action to measure progress.
- The definitions contained in the section “**Implementation**” create the institutional conditions for achieving the key objectives in a coherent, effective and efficient way, for

transparent and participative implementation, and for reflective further development of the Strategy.

- The “**First Steps**” listed in the Annex to the Strategy are an integral part of the Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development. They include those initiatives, projects and programmes already introduced or about to be introduced by the relevant ministries and interest groups, which are available at the time of adoption and which form the first concrete implementation measures for achieving the key objectives defined in the Strategy. The Annex also includes “**Innovative Examples**”, a selection of successfully implemented projects as an impulse for further activities.

The Austrian Sustainability Strategy thus offers significant improvements compared with the definition of sector targets as practised hitherto.

- It is designed as a government level concept and sets the points for a policy of sustainability that has a long-term orientation and defines binding framework conditions.
- As a catalogue of key objectives it contains clearly defined, concrete and long-term targets for a sustainable Austria in order to guarantee a coherent direction in sector policies.
- It underlines the importance of inter-ministerial and inter-institutional cooperation that goes beyond the boundaries of ministries and administrations.
- It thus offers long-term planning and investment security for all social groups, and it takes social equilibrium into account in its orientation.
- It names instruments for its implementation, and illustrates the first steps.
- It has been designed as a national umbrella for sustainability strategies, programmes and plans that already exist.
- It has been drawn up with consideration for European compatibility and has been coordinated with the international developments.
- It allows for regular and transparent monitoring of progress with a manageable number of clearly defined indicators.
- It is designed as a learning strategy that can react to altered framework conditions in a flexible and dynamic way, thus representing the beginning of a continuous process of implementation and further development.
- It clearly defines responsibilities and sets impulses for institutional innovations in order to control and design this process.
- It is intentionally limited to a general steering tool, thus creating free scope for coordinated decentralised implementation and opening up opportunities for participation.

The Austrian Sustainability Strategy is addressed to all the people in Austria. It is not only a self-obligation for the federal government, but also appeals to the provinces, regions and municipalities, as well as business and the individual citizen. In accordance with the principles of self-organisation, responsibility, subsidiarity and regionality, it should allow for independent bottom-up activities by all the actors with a mutual orientation towards major “leverage points”, providing them with the necessary backup at the federal level.

Securing Our Future

Trend that Run Counter to a Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a response to tendencies that have an adverse effect on our future. If we do not succeed in counteracting and reversing these tendencies within a reasonable time, many of them will become irreversible. This would have far-reaching ecological, economic and social consequences that would threaten not only the quality of life and the safety of future generations, but would also increase the costs for society drastically.

- The climate change, accelerated by greenhouse emissions, makes it necessary to take fast and determined steps to prevent irreversible changes. At the international level, Austria has always positioned itself as a proponent of pro-active climate protection policies. This positioning must now be followed by national and regional efforts within the scope of the measures taken by the international community of states.
- The globally dramatic loss of biodiversity threatens the heritage of future generations. According to experts from the WWF and IUCN, some 100 animal and plant species are irretrievably lost every day. This is not only a danger for the stability of ecosystems, there is also a threat that the largely still unexplored potentials of biogenetic resources could be lost for many fields of application.
- Increasing conurbation and the sealing of green surfaces not only results in ecosystems being destroyed, but also leads to dramatic costs for the associated infrastructure measures. In total, an average of 25 hectares of land are irretrievably lost due to construction measures and expansion of the transport infrastructure in Austria every day. The unbroken demand for detached houses in suburban areas with its high space requirements and the resulting transport impact is hardly compatible with the demands of a sustainable development. At the same time, the development potentials in rural areas are not being exploited sufficiently, resulting in structural weaknesses with migration tendencies and thus a weakening of the rural areas.
- The increase in civilization diseases illustrates the health-related dimension of sustainable development. The accumulation of hazardous substances in the food chain, resistance of pathogens, diseases caused by air pollutants, noise pollution and stress are only some examples of this new problem area.
- Security and social peace can be guaranteed first and foremost by economic prosperity, democratic decisions and an intact environment. The demographic development reinforces non-sustainable trends, especially in the social sector, and fast and future-oriented action is necessary to guarantee the solidarity of generations. Despite all efforts, equality of the genders still has not been achieved. The integration of foreigners requires special

attention both in urban and in rural areas. In view of the current and future demographic trends towards a sinking birth rate and simultaneous increase in the share of older people, solidarity between the generations is more important than ever.

- In order to enhance political interest, the opportunities for participation in planning and decision-making processes must be expanded. Only with a wide range of participation opportunities can a sustained development be aimed for and implemented together with the people. Local Agenda 21 processes can be one approach for this.
- Many people define quality of life increasingly on the basis of material and energy-intensive consumption. This prevailing orientation towards material prosperity results in consumption habits that lead to a drastic increase in the consumption of resources, energy and space, as well as an increase in waste and emissions. More than one third of the non-renewable resources and sources of energy known today have already been used up over the last 100 years. Currently, 20% of humans in the highly industrialized countries are using up 80% of the globally available resources – these resource-intensive production and consumption patterns are neither transferable to the entire world, nor can they be maintained in the long run under the aspects of a fair and just distribution.
- In addition to the tendencies listed here, the following security challenges must also be taken into account with regard to sustainable development on a global level: Propagation of mass destruction weapons, international terrorism, organised crime, ethnic conflicts and illegal migration.
- The environmental policy over the last decades in Austria has resulted in a reduction of pollutants, a ban on hazardous substances, and an improved quality of air and water. However, the signals that it has sent out were not strong enough to reduce the overall consumption of resources and to effect a general transition to renewable resources yet. Therefore, a change in the framework conditions both within Austria and at the international level is to the fore in the Strategy for a Sustainable Austria.
- The use of new technologies (e.g. the Internet, biotechnologies, microelectronics and in the field of medicine) creates a new scope for action, but also new social challenges (risks, liability issues, ethical issues, information and technology skills, etc.). However, the increasingly keen technology competition of a global and highly dynamic economy also offers new opportunities for innovative companies.
- The growth rates for transport services in the field of motorized freight and passenger transport are particularly high for those means of transport that have the most adverse impact on the environment. However, instead of gaining time this only results in more distance being covered daily, which in turn increases the amount of traffic. As a result of the current developments and trends in the transport system and increasing conurbation, the traffic situation and its negative consequences as well as the problem of commuting

are exacerbated. Whilst the industry has already succeeded in decoupling the increase in CO₂ emissions from economic growth, CO₂ emissions caused by traffic increased by 54% between 1980 and 1999. Reductions in the emissions of the various means of transport achieved by optimising the motor and drive technology have been more than made up for by an increase in the overall mileage covered. The social and health impacts of traffic are enormous. In Austria, road traffic accidents cause about one thousand deaths and some 50,000 casualties every year. The number of premature deaths due to air pollution caused by traffic is more than twice as high at 2,400. In addition, traffic is the main cause of noise pollution, which affects about one quarter of the Austrian population directly. The transport sector is also one of the main fields of action for achieving the goals of climate protection.

The Concept for a Sustainable Austria

Basic principles for today and tomorrow

The transition to a sustainable development cannot be limited to individual and gradual improvements, but much rather requires a fundamental reorientation in politics, society and economy that comprises all areas of life. The following twelve basic principles for a sustainable Austria are guidelines that should in future be taken into consideration by all the social actors in their decision-making. They must be viewed as equal and linked with each other, and as a whole they form the basis of the concept for a sustainable Austria.

- **Implementing the precautionary principle:** This means taking our responsibility for the heritage of future generations seriously and guaranteeing the preservation of natural resources, of economic success, and of social stability.
- **Maintaining diversity:** Diversity in nature, society, culture and business creates stability, protects from crises, and creates the development opportunities that guarantee a continuous evolution.
- **Aiming for integrative solutions:** Ecological, economic and social challenges must be taken into consideration jointly in every decision. This requires holistic thinking, inter- and transdisciplinarity.
- **Creating scope for innovations:** Social, institutional and technical innovations are interdependent. Therefore the powers of self-organisation must be reinforced, creative scope must be provided and impulses for automatic processes must be set.
- **Living the model of fairness and solidarity:** These fundamental values must be observed at the international level, between generations, social groups and age groups, and between the genders. Thereby, compensation for services required by society as a whole may be one tool for balancing interests.
- **Enhancing knowledge and desire:** The future must be won in the minds and hearts of people. This requires a long-term perspective, persuasion efforts oriented towards the lives of people, and a future-oriented shift in values.
- **Assuring quality and health:** The quality of social relationships, meaningful and motivating jobs, qualitative growth and wealth of time paraphrase a new lifestyle oriented towards quality, humanistic values and health.
- **Supporting regionality and subsidiarity:** In order to exploit the diversified knowledge of the local people, it is necessary to strengthen the future competence at the regional and communal level, whereby the different regional conditions and opportunities must be taken into consideration.
- **Enhancing local identity:** In order to preserve culture, tradition and local customs, globalisation requires a stronger awareness of local identity so that diversity and uniqueness can still be maintained in a globalised world in the future.

- **Supporting participation and networking:** Participation creates a better quality of decision-making by involving the individuals concerned as participants. This means not only inviting people to participate in political decision-making and shaping processes, but also creating the necessary structural conditions for such participation.
- **Setting clear signals:** The various policies must enhance each other mutually, pursue clear and coordinated objectives, and enhance the security of planning through long-term and consistent signals.
- **Achieving efficiency and effectiveness through cost fairness:** Future-oriented behaviour should also be rewarded individually by correct price signals. This is in compliance with the polluter pay principle, results in the internalisation of social and environmental costs, and sets clear incentives.
- **Guaranteeing further development and permanent learning:** Sustainable development cannot be described as a static goal. It is much rather a dynamic learning and shaping process that concerns society as a whole. The future is open: Its shaping requires process orientation, reflectivity, and a constructive approach to conflicts of interests.

As a social process, sustainable development cannot be achieved with standards and technological change alone. It also requires a fundamental shift in values, goals and – as a result – in the behaviour of society with regard to how it faces the challenges of the future.

Guaranteeing security in all its dimensions is also an important foundation for a sustainable development. The Austrian Sustainability Strategy and the Austrian national security policy, which was adopted as National Security and Defence Doctrine by the National Assembly in December 2001, complement each other with regard to their objectives. These include in particular the enhancement of security, peace and human rights.

The security sub-strategies to be developed by the end of 2002 on the basis of this Security and Defence Doctrine should take the Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development into account.

The Specific Situation in Austria

The Austrian Sustainability Strategy can build upon existing efforts and achievements. In recent decades, Austria has seen itself as a motor for environmental issues, and it can refer to some exceptional successes. The model of an ecosocial market economy, which promoted the aspects of sustainable development in our democratic system on the basis of a market economy, was developed in Austria as early as in the eighties. Meanwhile, Austria also wants to do justice to its responsibility in the field of sustainable development, and to position itself as a leader. The opportunities for technical and social innovation are to be used proactively, and a better quality of life that is guaranteed in the long term is to be achieved. Thereby, the specific situation in Austria should be taken into account.

- Austria is an alpine country with small-scale structures, valuable natural and cultivated landscapes (it has one of the highest degrees of biodiversity within the EU), agriculture and forestry oriented towards small-scale ecological structures, and excellent water resources, all of which have to be preserved in the long term.
- In this small country with a high import ratio for resources and sources of energy, the decoupling of economic growth from increased consumption of resources, as well as the enhanced use of renewable raw materials and sources of energy, offers Austria an opportunity to secure and improve the net value added and employment within the country.
- Austria's federalist culture requires that there is a strong emphasis on sustainable development at the regional and communal level, and respect for the small-scale business structures.
- For the tourism destination Austria, the conservation of an intact nature and an attractive cultivated landscape as well as preservation of authenticity is to the fore.
- For a country bordering directly on the future member states, enlargement of the European Union means new opportunities for Austria. It must be shaped as a continental and, in terms of the signals it sends out to the world, as a global project in terms of sustainability.
- As a transit country, Austria suffers from heavy goods traffic across the Alps, as well as from the increase in traffic resulting from European enlargement. The impact on the local population, on energy consumption and the resulting CO₂ emissions can only be reduced with an integrated transport policy that demands integration of everyone concerned at the national and international level.
- For Austria as an economically successful country, sustainable development means qualitative growth and more innovative solutions in the satisfaction of needs.

- For Austria as a prosperous country with a high standard of living, high life expectancy and social peace, sustainable development secures what has already been achieved and guarantees that the development will continue.
- Austria can look back on a tried and tested tradition of social partnership, which helps to resolve or prevent social conflicts in a constructive manner, and which must be developed further with consideration for the overall social objectives.
- The specific economic structure in Austria needs a healthy mix of large, medium-sized and small enterprises, production and services, as well as export orientation and self-supply capacities in accordance with a sustainable economy in order to secure the high standard of living.
- Our early renunciation of nuclear power has spared us the costs of this major technology, as well as the associated risks and social conflicts. Even today, some 23% of the energy consumption in Austria is covered by renewable sources of energy, which is an excellent basis for a sustainable energy policy by international comparison. In a multitude of model projects, technologies have been developed to reduce the consumption of resources and thus to help enterprises to cut costs.

Sound Public Finances as a Basis for Sustainable Development

Sound national budgets, no new debt, lower tax burden for the population

Only a financially healthy state is capable of social and economic performance. This requires a stable and sustainable financial policy as the key for providing major public services. Without a sound, healthy financial basis, Austria's services in the field of social security (especially in the field of old age pensions, nursing benefits, health service, family support), education and infrastructure cannot have a sound and calculable future. In order to master the financial challenges, financial discipline and fiscal reticence are central requirements, and the most important task is to ensure a balanced budget. Taxes must be transparent, fair and as simple as possible.

Sustainable, sound public finances are an important pillar for a stable macro-economic framework. Budgetary equilibrium within the economic cycle relieves the capital market and is thus the contribution of financial policy towards stable prices and low interest rates. These in turn are the sound basis for private investment. This applies not only to business. Especially for workers and families with a low income, a low interest burden is the all-important factor when buying housing.

With the successful reorganisation of the national budget, the state's interest and loan repayment obligations can be reduced permanently. The resulting scope for financial policy can be used in the long term for important future investments, e.g. in the field of infrastructure, and for R&D, thus contributing towards a higher economic growth potential.

Last but not least, successful budget consolidation is also a necessary prerequisite for a lasting reduction of the tax burden and for more equity between the generations. The debts of today are the taxes and duties of tomorrow. In view of the demographic challenges facing the funding of pensions, now is the time to create the best possible basis for these challenges to be overcome. Austria needs a balanced budget, if only to stop its national debt from increasing.

Healthy National Budget:

Securing balanced budgets throughout the economic cycle

The European Council in its Lisbon session in March 2000 set itself the target of making the Union the most dynamic and the most competitive economic area in the world by 2010. A sustainable financial policy with its manifold political and economic ramifications is particularly important. This requires above all the guarantee that there will always be scope for action within the budget policy. The higher the national debt and interest burdens are, the more in danger this scope for action is.

In the long run, public expenditures must not be higher than the revenues. A national budget can be regarded as healthy if there is equilibrium of expenditures and revenues in the medium term. The national budget must be balanced within an entire economic cycle. It is important to avoid deficits resulting from a fundamental excess of public expenditures. In future, there must be no more new debt in times of a good economy with low unemployment.

A balanced budget within the economic cycle is absolutely necessary, if total debt is not to increase further. This allows the state to react flexibly to economic situations, and thus to fulfil its tasks. As a result, future generations can concentrate on solving their own problems without first having to pay off the debts of their ancestors.

Austria achieved a balanced budget in 2001. The budgets are aimed at maintaining this zero deficit in the year 2002. The main task now is to continue in this direction.

Primarily, the budget should be kept balanced by taking measures on the spending side. Comparative studies by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) show that only budget reforms based on spending cuts can achieve a sustainable success. Cuts should not be made in a linear manner, but rather more specifically, taking political priorities into account. The political priorities include in particular investments in education, research, climate protection, public transport, and roads. These investments increase the productivity of a national economy and improve the framework conditions that make Austria particularly interesting for foreign investors.

The economic management of the federal administration must be improved. In addition to an extensive administrative reform, there are also financial and economic aspects. One instrument is performance-oriented management of the administration. At the same time, synergies can be exploited and redundance can be eliminated.

No New Debt:

Between 1990 and 1999, the public debt doubled to about 127 billion euros. The government spends about the same on loan interest as on education and science together. Recently, there has been a shift in trend with the zero deficit 2001, the budget target 2002, and strict budgetary discipline. In order to keep the public budgets balanced, however, further major efforts will be required.

The financial policy is heading in the right direction in the long run, if the increase in debt is not higher than the growth rate of the national economy (gross domestic product GDP). This can be achieved primarily if the public budgets are balanced within the economic cycle. Only then will the state have sufficient scope for action in order to master new or extraordinary challenges. The policy of making debts must in no case result in future generations no longer being able to finance important state functions.

The debt ratio is sustainable if the state can finance the debt without having to limit its central functions. A balanced financial account throughout the economic cycle results in stabilisation of the absolute debt, and thus in a lower debt ratio with economic growth.

With the “Maastricht” criteria, the EU has established binding benchmarks for the public debt of all the public budgets of a state. This benchmark is 60% of the gross domestic product. Austria’s debt ratio for 2001 is 61.7% of the gross domestic product. In 2002 it will be about 60%. If we succeed in maintaining the zero deficit, the debt ratio will continue to decrease in the coming years.

Reduction of Tax Burdens:

Creating more tax equity

Against the backdrop of fundamental global and national changes, the concept of equity is gaining a new value. The national economies are moving closer together. In international competition, it is the competitive edge in terms of working conditions, infrastructure, costs, taxes and duties that is becoming increasingly important for investment decisions and jobs. In terms of its tax ratio of 45.9 percent of the GDP for 2001, Austria is above the EU average of about 41.7 percent, and certainly well above the OECD average of 38.7 percent. Therefore, a sustainable reduction of the tax burden is necessary, which would open up scope for growth and corporate profits, thus allowing investments to be made and jobs to be created and preserved.

Therefore, the federal government has set itself the aim of reducing the tax ratio to below 40% of the gross domestic product by the year 2010. From today's perspective, this means a reduction of the tax burden by 17 to 20 billion euros by the year 2010. The Austrian tax ratio is to become one of the lowest in the OECD. The consequences are: More financial scope for everyone, and thus additional job opportunities in business and in society. Private consumption will be stimulated, more private funds will be available for investment, and economic growth will continue to accelerate.

This reduction of the tax burden must be implemented gradually. The aim is to take the first steps as early as in 2003. At the same time, the target will still be to maintain a balanced budget throughout the economic cycle. Both employees and employers should benefit equally from this tax relief.

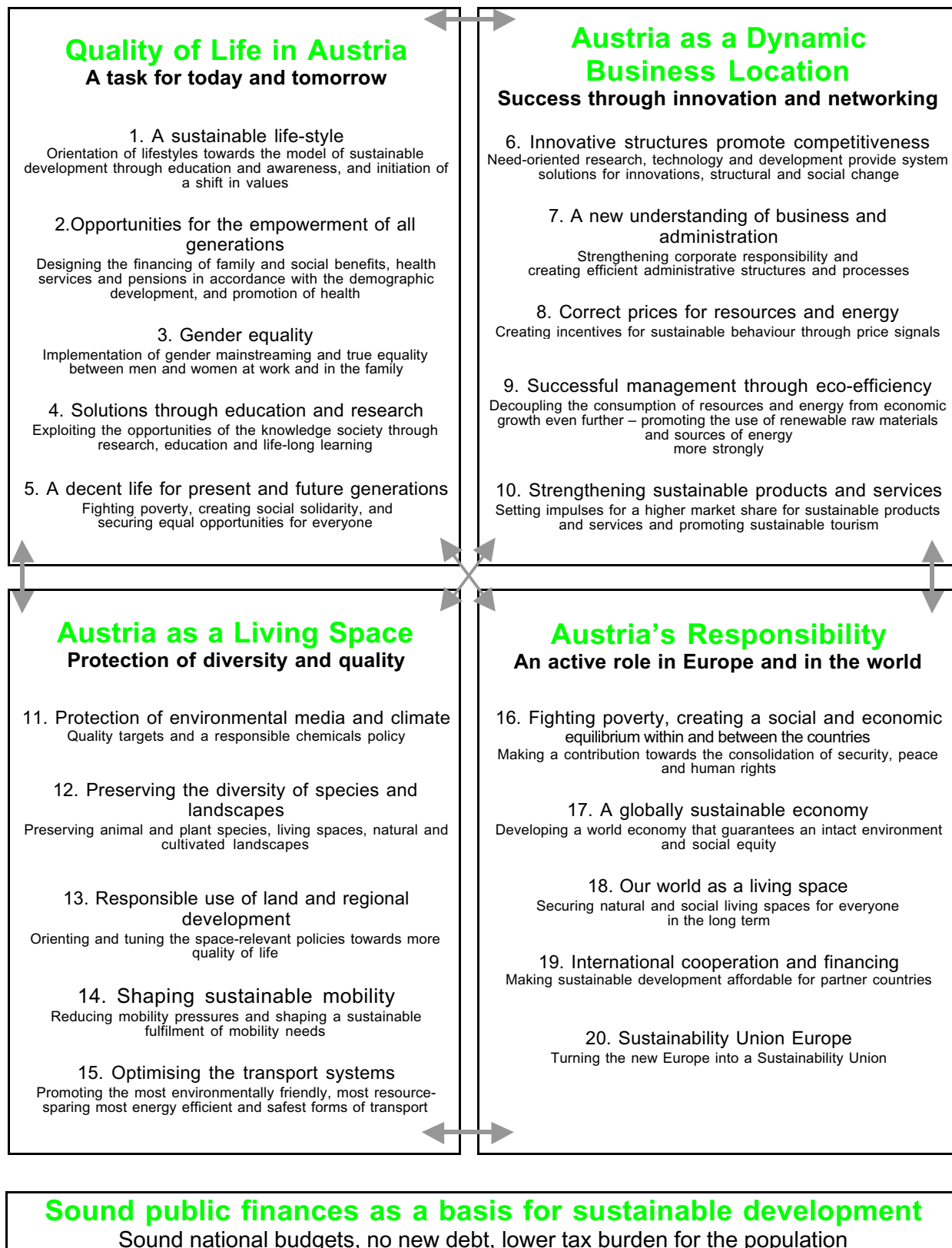
The necessary scope is to be created with the help of a policy mix consisting of the following categories of measures:

- Measures to increase economic growth and employment
- Measures to cut public spending, and
- Improved budgeting instruments.

A budget policy that supports growth and employment is very important for the Austrian welfare state, which depends on a high level of employment. Therefore it is important to design the measures in such a way that within the scope of economic structure reform more jobs are created on the domestic service sector, the demand for social benefits is reduced or the growth rate slowed down, and thus the ratio of social contributions can be reduced. This is one contribution towards a reduction of the tax burden.

The Fields of Action

At the heart of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy are the **20 key objectives**, which are broken down into **four major fields of action**:



Together, these key objectives form an interlinked, consistent and verifiable target system:

Each of the key objectives has a clear reference to trends and tendencies that run counter to a sustainable development. Their achievement is a major contribution towards a sustainable Austria. Thus, they serve to secure the future both by avoiding threats and by exploiting opportunities. Concentration on the main “leverage points” provides a rough guidance that creates scope for decentralised and at the same time coherent implementation. The implementation of these four fields of action must be based on sound public finances, i.e. on a balanced public budget throughout the economic cycle without new debt and with tax relief for the population.

In order to guarantee a consistent policy, intensive coordination with international treaties, regional and sectoral strategies is planned. Thus, this Strategy not only provides an orientation framework for policies at the national level, but also calls for active participation by all social groups. It lays down the framework and at the same time leaves the actors in the provinces, municipalities, NGOs and enterprises scope to develop and implement strategies, targets and measures within their own competences and capabilities.

- The achievement of the key objectives can be measured. Wherever possible, the targets are quantified, have a clear time reference, and are associated with a handy set of indicators for their measurement. Thereby, special attention was paid to international comparability, data availability and efficiency of data collection. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation should guarantee transparency and an organised learning process. The impacts and anticipated costs of the strategy steps are not shown in many of the fields of action yet. Evaluation must not be limited to implementation alone, but must also include the target perspectives set out in the fields of action and in the key objectives.
- The implementation is a continuous process that has already started. The “First Steps” presented in the Annex to the Strategy illustrate a selection of programmes, projects, initiatives and institutional innovations, the implementation of which has already been started. Further measures have to be developed and evaluated in the implementation process. The “Innovative Examples” presented have already been implemented successfully in recent years, and they should provide impulses for similar projects and further propagation.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN AUSTRIA

A task for today and tomorrow

Physical and mental health for all classes of society is imperative for a life that is worthy of human beings. Solidarity and a social equilibrium serve to offer every human a fair opportunity to participate in society and to live in dignity. The countries with a well-established social system are usually also the ones that are most competitive. In particular, the legal framework must guarantee that the members of society can live together in harmony. Social security and social solidarity are prerequisites for shaping a sustainable economy. In order to guarantee sustainable financing of the individual social systems, there is a clear belief in social market economy and in the European social model, in which the market economy is linked with solidarity and social equilibrium. However, in order to maintain the strengths of the Austrian social system, continuous evaluation and further development of the benefits offered and provided are necessary.

Fairness and tolerance between the generations, between different groups of society and between the genders are central prerequisites for social solidarity. The most important starting points thereby are the fight against discrimination of disadvantaged groups, equal access to rights, and open access to resources, goods and services, as well as acceptance of the diversity of the life needs of various groups. The participation opportunities must not be determined by gender. They should be equal for all human beings, and it should be possible to use them on the basis of individual decisions. A sustainable lifestyle requires tolerance, solidarity, and responsibility for the consequences of one's own behaviour. It is based upon a resource- and energy-sparing lifestyle and it creates a high quality of social and regional relationships.

With the upbringing and care of children and elderly relatives, families provide services that are indispensable and worth their weight in gold for the solidarity of society, and apart from financial support they also need support for their personal resources in order to be able to fulfil these manifold and demanding tasks in a society that is becoming more and more differentiated.

Research, education and information are the central starting points for the necessary change in lifestyle. It is the task of research to develop suitable theories and models for a sustainable development, to promote inter- and transdisciplinarity, participation and networking, to create the foundations for technological, structural and social innovations, and thus to make a contribution towards securing the business location Austria. In addition to the teaching of content, an education for sustainability must also comprise the values of the concept for sustainable development and the skills necessary for its implementation. Training and life-long further education are also central requirements for securing the standard of living and social participation of as many people as possible. Responsible consumer behaviour requires not

only a sensitisation, but also reliable and complete information. With behavioural offers and a demonstration of the consequences of own behaviour, all the social actors should be made aware of their responsibility for a sustainable development. As a result, the sensitisation that already exists in many areas can be transported into concrete behaviour.

Key Objective 1 – A Sustainable Life-style

Orientation of lifestyles towards the model of sustainable development through education and awareness, and initiation of a shift in values

Background / Problem

The prevailing orientation towards material prosperity currently results in consumption habits that lead to a constant increase in the consumption of resources, energy and surface. Therefore, the strategy for a Sustainable Austria must also address the lifestyles and consumption habits of the people and their models and infrastructures. Thereby, the aim is not only to react to social trends, but also to actively change the lifestyles and consumption habits in the direction of a sustainable society, and to promote a shift in values towards a less resource- and energy-intensive lifestyle. The central starting points thereby are education, sensitisation and information. Understanding for a sustainable development as a global challenge and for the need for appropriate initiatives in the field of development cooperation must also be promoted. In the medium term, this should contribute towards a better understanding of and more enlightened approach to these problems.

Objective

The key objective with regard to a viable future lifestyle is characterised by the principles of local identity, long-term time frame, diversity, naturalness, partnership, quality before quantity, and short distances, all of which determine the concept of a “sustainable development”. With behavioural offers and a demonstration of the consequences of own behaviour, all the social actors should be made aware of their responsibility for a sustainable development, and the sensitisation that already exists in many areas should be translated into concrete behaviour. It is especially important that the social and political decision-makers and opinion leaders are committed to and fully support sustainable development (“sustainability leadership”). Furthermore, criteria must be developed for a viable future lifestyle, along the lines of which every person can orient him- or herself. The key objective of this strategy until the year 2005 is to integrate the concept of sustainable development as interdisciplinary material in all school curricula and in further training for teachers, to define the contents and methodological requirements for an education for sustainability, to develop teaching materials quickly, and to establish sustainable development as a basic subject in the curricula of universities, technical colleges and teachers’ training colleges. Thereby it is also necessary to convey the complex relationships in the field of development cooperation, environment and sustainable development, in order to promote understanding and commitment for these issues.

Starting Points

Sustainable development requires that there is a shift in consumption habits, and thus a shift in values. A policy of sustainable development means not only reacting to social trends, but also actively changing lifestyles and consumption habits in the direction of a less resource-

and energy-intensive lifestyle. The main focus of this shift in values is on refuting the current belief that consumption of goods is equal to well-being. The quality of social and regional relationships, “having a good life” instead of “having everything”, sharing and using instead of possessing, quality and longevity of products, use of services as a status symbol, spare time, social and cultural activities, tolerance, solidarity also in the global context, and taking responsibility for the consequences and indirect effects of one’s own consumption behaviour – these are the building bricks for a sustainable lifestyle. Thus, the propagation of a less resource-, material- and energy-intensive lifestyle and a shift from quantity-oriented to service-oriented consumer behaviour should be promoted. However, it must also be noted that these opportunities are not available to the different social groups to the same degree. This must be taken into consideration in concrete measures.

Consumer behaviour is influenced by the economic environment and is learned in the social context. Therefore, the central starting points for changing consumption behaviour are education, sensitisation and information. Education for sustainability comprises both the ethical and value dimension of the sustainability concept, and also the specific skills necessary for its implementation. Education should become knowledge, then understanding, and finally comprehension of what is important. The themes of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy must become the subject of teaching and learning processes that can lend the complex model of sustainable development contours and make it possible for people to experience and grasp this model in everyday life. Thereby, ethically oriented self-determination, diversity of lifestyles and adequate scope for individuality must be taken into account. Sustainable development cannot be prescribed - it must be experienced by the people as something that is modern, responsible and individually positive. A social discourse on sustainable consumption habits and production methods must be initiated with the aim of enhancing the sensitisation of everyone involved. Thereby, the psychosocial dimension (needs, motives and aims of human action) and possible fields of conflict (both individual and group-specific) must be taken into consideration.

Responsible consumption behaviour requires not only a sensitisation, but also reliable and complete information. With the labelling of products and other suitable information mechanisms, the consumption of resources and energy (both in the production of goods and in their use) should become the central criterion for purchase decisions. The credibility of marks of excellence is to be guaranteed by few but clearly defined quality marks. Better information about the environmental impacts in pre-production should allow an integrative assessment of the “ecological rucksacks” of consumer goods. This should pave the way from the eco-niche to the mass market for appropriate products, whereby the specific role of the retail trade must be taken into consideration. Thereby it is particularly important to ensure maximum involvement of the enterprises and active integration of the economy, especially advertising as a central multiplier for lifestyles and consumption patterns. It is also the responsibility of the public sector to guarantee transparency and credibility of the marks of

excellence and to ensure that this information is disseminated in order to promote consumer awareness. Thereby, both the citizens' costs of obtaining information and the businesses' costs of providing information must be kept at an acceptable level.

Key Objective 2 – Opportunities for the Empowerment of All Generations

Designing the financing of family and social benefits, health services and pensions in accordance with the demographic development, and promotion of health

Background / Problem

Generation fairness requires that the standard of living be guaranteed for everyone, including later generations. Young people today should be able to grow up with confidence. Getting older should not be experienced as a threat. With a constantly higher life expectancy, ageing and death in dignity must be guaranteed. Especially the civilisation diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic degenerative and mental disorders or infectious diseases present a challenge to our health system and demand for innovative solutions. The demographic development presents new challenges to the financing of social security. As the development in the last 30 years has shown, these challenges can be overcome if more measures are taken to increase the employment rate. Nonetheless, adjustments in the financing of social benefits, the health system and the pension system will be necessary. A general reform can only be implemented gradually with a long-term perspective, since it affects the life planning of everyone.

Objective

The key objective of the Strategy for a Sustainable Austria is to prepare an overall concept by the year 2010 for a reform in the funding of social benefits, the health system and the pension system based on the long-term population forecast, and to have initiated the necessary reform steps with the first projects. Important objectives in this context are family- and child-friendly framework conditions, a socially just reform of the pension systems, the development of new approaches in the pension system that go beyond funding, the guarantee that young people will be able to enter into gainful employment directly, better job integration of older employees, high-quality health and nursing services, and the expansion of care services (nursing) and social services (support for nursing relatives, strengthening of the hospice movements). Thereby, guaranteeing the standard-of-living principle and intergenerational and gender-specific distribution fairness, as well as improving the overall condition with comprehensive measures tuned to each phase of life must have priority.

Starting Points

Social sustainability requires closely knit, strong and just social systems and that the solidarity of generations is preserved. The guiding principle thereby should be independent coverage by the public social system for everyone. For this purpose, a system of services and arrangements must be developed in the field of family policy as well as in health, pension and unemployment insurance, which takes the specific needs of people in the individual phases of life into account. This requires that models and arrangements in the field of health, unemployment and pension insurance be formulated precisely, and that supplementary private insurance models be developed further. Moreover, social and activating supports should be provided, and access to socially relevant material benefits and services (access to education and further education, to occupational and medical rehabilitation, nursing support and care services) should be made possible. To achieve this, a range of nationwide social services in the field of nursing and care both for children and for the elderly to relieve the parents, families or relatives, and an expansion of both the family-friendly infrastructure and of housing suitable for the handicapped and the elderly are necessary. With the further development of a catalogue of family services – which has progressed furthest at the European level – and the introduction of a nursing care system, Austria has reacted to the need for economic security of young families and the rising number of people requiring nursing care. In addition to monetary benefits (childcare allowance, nursing allowance), this also comprises the provision of an adequate range of nursing and social services by the provinces. Based on the relevant agreement between the federal government and the provinces, the provinces have drawn up need and development plans for their own region, which they are now implementing continuously until 2010. Thereby, both the demographic development and the anticipated increase in demand for nursing care are taken into account. By 2010, the number of home places is to be increased by about 10% on average. Nationwide social services in the field of nursing and care should help to relieve nursing relatives, provided this is affordable for the pension insurance system. In order to guarantee financing of the social systems and to reduce the financial burdens for younger generations to an acceptable level, a sound, anticipating migration policy is required in addition to the approaches described below – not only for the sake of the national economy.

Physical and mental health for all classes of society is imperative for a life that is worthy of human beings. An important aspect thereby is maintenance of the high quality health systems available to everyone and financed by everyone. It is important to counteract any dual-class health system. Further important approaches are the reinforcement of nursing facilities and social services, a uniform national quality assurance system for the health service, and a national plan to promote health and prophylaxis. Thereby, health as defined by the WHO means not only the absence of illness, but rather a comprehensive well being. In addition to traditional medicine, special attention should therefore be paid to comprehensive services aimed at promoting health and prophylaxis. Active health care also means eliminating or at least reducing the many sources of danger that impair the health of more and more people due to constantly increasing environmental stress. Agriculture, in particular, has an important function in guaranteeing health: With the guaranteed safety and healthiness of foods, natural animal husbandry and consideration for the issues of animal protection, complete labelling and quality assurance for foods, and renunciation of the use of genetically modified organisms. An enhanced nutritional awareness should result not only in changed consumer behaviour, but also improve the health of the population and the regional nature of diet.

The aim of the employment policy must be to raise the employment rate of older employees at least to the EU average (e.g. by promoting the further education of older employees and increasing the ratio of part-time pensions). Moreover, a work world suitable for the elderly and for aging must be developed that takes the needs and skills of older employees into account. More flexible working hour models should allow part-time work and a gradual retirement from gainful employment. This would allow better and longer use to be made of the experience of older people, improve the age mix, and promote the dialogue between the generations. Under the aspect of a constantly increasing life expectancy and the higher share of older people in the total population, the productive contribution of older people is also becoming more and more important, both in the economic and in the idealistic sense. The promotion of volunteer work for older people in their retirement as a further opportunity to lead a meaningful life in old age and as a measure to prevent the premature need for nursing care not only helps the senior citizens themselves, but is also a major contribution towards the general welfare. Participative projects that promote communication should help to enhance the exchange between the generations. To achieve this, generation speakers should be established in all social bodies.

Family policy must continue to be an important aspect in protecting the “sociotope” family. The services that families provide for society as a whole are also valued and rewarded financially by the introduction of the childcare allowance and by better family support, for example. This means that there must be both the necessary vertical redistribution within the scope of an efficient social policy and a horizontal redistribution to people who are currently bringing up children. In addition to a just transfer of benefits to families, we must also continue to pursue the development of a child- and family-friendly environment and work world. Especially in a society that is constantly and rapidly changing, the family as a network of solidarity is extremely important both for its members and for society as a whole. On the one hand, the families’ private sphere must remain within their own responsibility, but on the other hand the state also has an obligation to guarantee optimal opportunities for families, children and older family members. Therefore, support for families in the fulfilment of their fundamental social, material and intellectual functions is an objective of a welfare-oriented social policy.

Sustainable development guarantees the opportunities and development potentials of future generations. Therefore, participation of the young generation in decision-making processes is an important focus at all political and social levels and should secure the intergeneration exchange. It is in youth that the points are set for behaviour and attitudes with regard to the issues of society and the relationship between generations. For children and adolescents to develop into independent and self-confident personalities, it is of great importance to continue promoting educational and youth work outside school, especially to promote the development of intellectual, social and physical skills and to convey ethical and religious values.

By promoting youth organisations, youth centres and initiatives, structures must be established in which young people learn values and life skills in addition to pure leisure activities. The promotion of such institutions also guarantees structures that accompany the important process of leaving home and permit meaningful socialisation in adult life.

Youth information measures and the establishment of youth information centres create a situation in which young people can fully develop their own competences and skills by offering them easy, low-barrier and full access to the relevant information about mobility options, informal further education and training, and other adequate offers at the local, regional, national and European level.

Stronger integration of young people in decision-making processes (participation) guarantees that in the long term democratic competence and the feeling of responsibility towards society are enhanced and togetherness of the generations is regarded as perfectly natural. Suitable co-determination models also allow young people to be integrated in communal and regional processes in the long term. Measures of prophylaxis and health promotion for young people create the necessary conditions for young people not to become dependent or impair their health right at the beginning of their independent life. Thereby, prevention programs designed for sustainability value not only a short-term change of attitude in the individual, but are also aimed at a shift towards health-promoting structures in society as a whole.

Key Objective 3 – Gender Equality

Implementation of gender mainstreaming and true equality of men and women at work and in the family

Background / Problem

The central challenges for equality of the genders are better compatibility of family and occupation, equal pay for equal work, and independent pension insurance for women and men. The conditions for employment of women have improved continuously, and in 2001 the employment rate of women in Austria increased by about 25,000 gainfully employed women over the year 2000. The increase over the year 1999 is by 50,000 gainfully employed women. By international comparison, the Austrian employment rate for women aged between 25 and 49 of 73.5% is one of the highest. This participation in gainful employment is relativated by the high share of part-time employment. In 1999, almost one in three women (32.1%) but only 3.3% of men had part-time employment. However, part-time employment and interruptions in employment have a strong impact on the income curve (the gross hourly wage of part-time employees is 18% lower on average than that of full-time employees). Generally, women are more threatened by poverty, both individually and within the family. A qualitative re-orientation of the role- and self-image of the genders and equal distribution of care obligations and double burdens is therefore necessary in order for women to have the same opportunities for participation, shaping and decision-making in social processes.

Objective

The key objective of the Strategy for a Sustainable Austria by 2010 is to secure equal access to employment opportunities for women and men with a simultaneous re-orientation (double burdens, pay) and harmonisation of participation as partners in the work of upbringing and care through a shift in the role- and self-image of women and men. Another objective is to enhance the socio-political and financial value of unpaid or low-paid work (e.g. in the field of social occupations and care obligations) compared with gainful employment in the narrower sense.

Starting Points

The compulsory observation of equality of women and men in all areas of life and politics must be reinforced. This complies with the principle of gender mainstreaming, which gained comprehensive importance at the international and European level through the 4th World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995, the Treaty of Amsterdam, and the 3rd and 4th Action Programme of the European Commission for equal opportunities for women and men. It consists of the (re-)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of political processes with the objective of integrating a gender-specific perspective in all political concepts, at all levels, and in all phases by all the actors involved in political decision-making.

Equal opportunity means that women and men have the same opportunities to participate in business, political, social and cultural life by their own free decision. The participation opportunities should not be determined by gender. They should be equal for all humans, and it should be possible to use them on the basis of individual decisions. The promotion of equal opportunity thus also requires that we eliminate unequal gender-specific structures, and that we aim for equality of women and men.

A change in the gender-specific distribution of work (gainful employment and reproduction), and at the same time a higher regard for upbringing, nursing and social work is an important starting point in order to achieve true equality.

The compatibility of work and family is – especially for women – one of the greatest challenges and has a significant impact on the individual career. Therefore, a specific commitment at all socio- and economic political levels should aim to improve the framework conditions for compatibility of family and work. A big step forward has already been made with the introduction of childcare benefit as a financial compensation for care services in the years of intensive infant care, associated with independent pension insurance and health insurance through statutory contributions by the Family Burden Transfer Fund.

Generally, a new awareness for the togetherness of a performance-oriented society and families must be achieved. Measures such as coaching programmes for women returning to work after a family pause, incentives for corporate-internal processes with the objective of a family-conscious personnel policy, flexible working time models, flexible childcare models, and the establishment of services that support families should support this objective.

Major starting points for achieving social security for women lie in the guarantee of a subsistence for women after a divorce, and in independent pension insurance for women. In health, unemployment and pension insurance, the principle of independent insurance for everyone must be implemented. It is necessary to establish a system of independent pensions for women who were not able to acquire own pension rights in the context of partnerships, in order to guarantee a just distribution of pension claims. Times in which emergency assistance from unemployment insurance is not granted due to the partner's income should still be recognized as insurance periods for pension insurance, if this can be implemented without additional costs within the scope of a pension reform.

In parallel, there must be a broad social discourse on the value of gainful employment and family work (housework, care and support obligations), the role image of women and men, the compatibility of parenthood, upbringing and gainful employment, and the social security of new types of families (e.g. single parents) and single-earner families. It is the responsibility of

the state to design appropriate processes (e.g. the establishment of think tanks) and thus to create the value basis for true equality.

Key Objective 4 – Solutions Through Education and Research

Exploiting the opportunities of the knowledge society through research, education and life-long learning

Background / Problem

Education and continuous further education are decisive for the course of life and the individual opportunities and risks of people. An inadequate and unfinished education is the main reason for unemployment and the threat of poverty. Education is a central factor of influence on income, and it is the prerequisite for full participation in society. Broad implementation of the principle of “life-long learning” is a central prerequisite for enabling social innovation, consolidating Austria’s international competitiveness, and preserving social solidarity. This can only be realised if the citizens perceive further education positively as an opportunity and possibility, and as a part of the quality of life. The education system in turn must face the challenge of teaching contents, values, and social skills, and also striving for as high a level of education as possible for as many people as possible. Access to education must be easy and affordable. Only then can the opportunities of the knowledge society be exploited.

Objective

The key objective for a sustainable development is to halve the number of people without a completed education by the year 2015. By the year 2003, the “indicator for life-long learning” required in accordance with EU obligations must be identified, and then a quantitative target for increasing the number of people with vocational further training must be defined for the period until 2015. National research programmes for a sustainable development and their international networking must be expanded further. The research system is called upon to provide the knowledge categories “system knowledge” (structures and processes), “target knowledge” (scenarios and forecasts) and “transformation knowledge” (from the status quo to the target status) that are equally relevant for implementation.

Starting Points

Education and further education are central elements of an active employment policy aimed at increasing the employment capability (with promotion programmes for those most disadvantaged in society, e.g. foreigners, young people of the second generation and young migrants, single parents, the long-term unemployed), and at the same time at reducing the lack of labour (e.g. in the information and communication technologies). To achieve this, the principle of life-long learning must be promoted and access to accompanying further education through a better range of educational offers for all age groups must be secured (e.g. in adult education programmes, corporate training programmes). Appropriate incentives in the tax, transfer and education system, “active aging” and “e-learning” are good starting points. Education and further education, as well as skills acquired in the area of non-formal

learning also play an important role in the long-term preservation of Austria's economic power, and in preserving and increasing the number of well-trained human resources and the internationally competitive know-how as location factors. Further education should be perceived positively as an opportunity and an element of a high quality of life. Therefore, own initiative and own motivation should be established as educational content, learning should be fun, and practical, life-oriented offers should be promoted.

The education system ranges from kindergarten to adult education: Pre-school and school education, vocational training, academic education and further education, and life-long learning are the keys for a globally secure future. The efforts made so far in the field of education and communication about sustainability must be acknowledged in their fundamental significance by all the actors in formal and informal education, and considerably expanded, intensified, improved, planned and evaluated. Specific education programmes and communication strategies must be developed for each of the fields of action in the Austrian Sustainability Strategy. The activities and programmes already under way must be supplemented and intensified, and they require coordination and efficient tuning in terms of educational policy. The complex model of "Sustainable Development" must acquire a clearer contour not least through educational and communication measures. The objective thereby is to translate and process the conceptual core elements and the fields of action of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy (and its relationships) in an age-, target group- and situation-specific manner. Politics, and especially the education sector are both called upon to reduce and "break down" the complexity without losing sight of the connections. Thereby, carefully selected models and learning from examples have particularly good chances. But also the new media and distance learning should be developed and used even more specifically towards sustainability. Supporting and promoting the acquisition of skills (problem-solving skill, conflict skill, knowledge through experience, solidarity, future-oriented networked thinking, team skill and especially shaping skill) and the necessary methods and learning environments is certainly a strength that formal and non-formal education can contribute towards the sustainability process. This requires intensive mutual efforts in the field of formal and informal education, and close cooperation between the political decision-makers at all levels and the various actors in the field of education for a sustainable development. This also requires both self-organisation and public support. Cooperation between research and education for a sustainable development must be promoted at the concept, programme and project level. Not only interdisciplinary cooperation, but also cooperation between various everyday, social and political areas, and not least between the various educational areas (for example development politics, health or political education) must be promoted. Thereby, sustainability also means social learning as a dialogue-participative discourse. In order to achieve high standards of education and communication for sustainability, quality parameters must be developed that will be recognised, developed further and observed by everyone. Therefore, it is sensible in the

medium term to develop a nationwide sustainability audit for educational facilities (similar to the environmental mark for schools), which as a quality mark for educational institutions will underline not only the establishment of environmental management systems, but also and to a special degree their pedagogical quality features.

Education requires knowledge and thus research for a sustainable development. Therefore, a central challenge for the research system is the development of suitable theories and models for a sustainable development in order to provide the scientific basis for sustainability-oriented political action at the national and international level (inter alia in the field of environmental, social, economic and technological policy). In compliance with the demands of sustainable development, inter- and transdisciplinarity, participation and networking must be promoted. This requires that a research-political target system and research-political instruments and measures be developed and established, which will serve to stimulate innovations for a sustainable development of society, the economy and the environment. The sciences are called upon to contribute their knowledge as consulting services in politics, the economy and administration, and thus to contribute towards transporting basic theories into concrete decision-making situations. The central research-political instrument is contract research or programme research, which can bring together and complement the sustainability-relevant research activities of the Federal Ministries, provinces and application-oriented funds, as well as the technology- and economy-oriented projects of the Council for Research and Technological Development where necessary. This way, technical potentials can be activated and positive synergies can be used. In addition, efforts will be made to achieve greater international collaboration, competitiveness and problem-solving skills (promotion of human resources) of the scientific community at the service of sustainable development. Sustainability-relevant joint international research, international networking and joint financing (e.g. within the scope of the European research area, the EU framework programmes for research and technological development, the UN science initiatives) should therefore be expanded. Other starting points in research for a sustainable development are: Integration of education, art, politics and practice in research initiatives, promotion of inter- and transdisciplinarity, democratisation and participation in R&D policy, gender mainstreaming in research and teaching, quality assurance and evaluation.

Key Objective 5 – A Decent Life for Present and Future Generations

Fighting poverty, creating social solidarity, and securing equal opportunities for everyone

Background / Problem

Ensuring a decent life for present and future generations is to the fore in any responsible policy. Material and social security are the basis for a sustainable social fairness. This requires social integration, social security, and social acceptance of various models for living together, individual income, and the ability to ward off specific threats. Security and integration are just as necessary for humans in their working lives (e.g. single parents, people affected by changed work requirements or by sickness) as they are for individuals who are not gainfully employed (e.g. the unemployed, homeless, children, youths, people on maternity leave and senior citizens). In Austria, some 340,000 people are currently living below the poverty limit, and 900,000 people are threatened by poverty. People in precarious jobs, people affected by structural change, the “working poor”, long-term unemployed, single-earners in the lower wage classes in households with children, single parents, divorced people without an own income, migrant households, the households of totally or partly disabled people, people in structurally weak rural regions, highly indebted people and social fringe groups are particularly threatened. A decent life also requires a meaningful occupation that fulfils the personality, which at the same time is the best weapon in the fight against poverty. Suitable framework conditions should provide incentives for companies to employ more people. Access to the labour market should be facilitated with suitable measures (e.g. childcare, education and further education) for people who are able to work.

Objective

The key objective for a sustainable development is to fight poverty by providing access to full social participation and to support for integration in the work process. Therefore, the number of people living below the poverty limit or threatened by poverty in Austria must be reduced markedly. A stronger orientation towards the model of sustainable development in the national employment plan and the action plan against poverty and social exclusion should help to ensure a consistent policy in this area, too.

Starting Points

In order to counteract the development of poverty, both a distribution of income and work that is fair in terms of performance and an active labour market policy are necessary. In addition, minimum security benefits within the scope of pension insurance (subsistence allowance) or emergency assistance can also help to avoid poverty.

Increasing the employment rate is a primary objective in order to counteract the spiral of poverty. Opportunities for integration on the labour market must be available to everyone who is willing and able to work, so that the people can secure an independent existence with their own working income. Thereby, the main focus is on a further reduction of the youth unemployment rate through integrative measures, a higher employment rate for older people, and a further reduction of long-term unemployment.

A major factor thereby is also the working time that is offered: On the one hand, the search for full-time employment should be supported; at the same time, innovative working hour models (e.g. job sharing, cafeteria models) must be developed further in pilot projects in order to investigate their contribution towards a better compatibility of gainful employment and social relationships.

When shaping the work world, the compatibility of gainful employment and social relationships, social security and security at work and at the same time flexibility of employment contracts, social aspects at the workplace, campaigns against mobbing at the workplace, and equality of men and women must be reinforced. In this context, the work conditions, especially the quality of the workplace in a comprehensive sense, the protection of safety and health at work, and the effects of new technologies and improvements in the organisation of work are of central importance. This includes the promotion of family-friendly working hours and a family-compatible work world as a whole, as well as suitable jobs for people with disabilities or handicaps. If poverty is to be overcome permanently, the people affected must be given an opportunity to control their situation with as much own responsibility as possible, whereby this sometimes requires professional help.

In concrete, poverty can also be avoided by accepting certain situations in life socially and offering financial assistance (e.g. nursing need, care and upbringing of children, etc.), and by insuring socially valuable periods of non-employment (e.g. further education, nursing and upbringing times, social work, etc.). The integration or re-integration of disabled persons in gainful employment and their social participation must be pursued, and the funds appropriated for the integration of disabled persons in gainful employment must be regarded as a significant impulse in this direction. Efforts are being made to expand the integration opportunities (e.g. in the legal sense) for foreigners in order to allow them to improve their economic and social participation. Thereby, support measures to overcome the language barrier as taken e.g. within the scope of the Integration Package are also important. However, the problem of poverty cannot be solved with financial benefits (social support) alone. Much rather, a multitude of social rights, aids, material assistance and services (in the field of families, through school education, through public infrastructure, through education, by fighting xenophobia, etc.) are necessary to solve this problem. Special attention must be paid to the specific threat of poverty and specific needs of certain types of family such as families with

many children, single-earner and single-parent families. Concentrating on financial benefits alone would certainly appear to be insufficient wherever the social conditions are too inadequate to allow a reasonable participation in working and social life. Therefore, the freedom to choose from various “lifestyle models” is an important part of a self-determined lifestyle, and it guarantees social diversity. Social security and social acceptance of various family and partnership models are a prerequisite for this.

The childcare benefit introduced on January 1, 2002, and the improved family support are major contributions towards the prevention of poverty.

The foundations of social peace are social integration and tolerance between the various groups of society while maintaining cultural identity. The most important starting points thereby are the fight against discrimination of disadvantaged groups, equal access to rights and open access to resources, goods and services for everyone, as well as acceptance of the diversity of the life needs of various groups. Concrete measures and programmes in the education system, especially in the field of education and further education, must also be designed and implemented in collaboration with NGOs here. In the fields of legal counselling, debt counselling and legal representation, it is particularly important to ensure easy access for the groups concerned. The chances of social and economic participation for foreigners should also be improved (in part by the Integration Package). When using the new information technologies (e.g. Internet), it is important to make sure that all population groups have access (e-inclusion).

Indicators

- Distribution of income (S80/S20 ratio)¹
- Risk of poverty²
- Persistent risk of poverty³
- Long-term unemployment rate⁴
- Share of female and male employees on (paid and unpaid) parental leave in the total number of parents concerned
- Population in jobless households⁵
- Self defined health status by income level⁶
- Employment growth⁷
- Life-long learning (adult participation in education and training)⁸
- Early school leavers not in further education or training⁹
- Further vocational training¹⁰
- Employed persons and employment rates by gender¹¹
- Income disadvantage of women in full-time employment¹²
- Health status of the population¹³

¹ Ratio of the total income received by the 20% of the country's population with the highest income (top quintile) to that received by the 20% of the country's population with the lowest income (lowest quintile). The income distribution is calculated using the equivalised total income.

² Share of population below the cut-off threshold before and after social transfers ("total income"); the low-income line is set at 60% of median equivalised income per person.

³ Share of the population having an income below 60% of the equivalised median income in each country for the current year and at least two of the preceding three years.

⁴ Total long-term unemployed (over 12 months) as a percentage of total active population – harmonised series.

⁵ Percentage of people in households in which no member in employment among all people living in households with at least one person belonging to the labour force.

⁶ Ratio of the proportions in the bottom and top quintile groups (by equivalised income) of the population aged 16 and over who classify themselves as in a bad or very bad health based on the WHO definition; gender break down + total.

⁷ Annual change in total employed population (total, women and men).

⁸ % of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training (adult participation in education and training during the four-week period preceding the survey).

⁹ Share of population aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education and not in education or training. (Source: Microcensus)

¹⁰ Can be calculated on the basis of the question concerning further education in the last 4 weeks from the employee survey in Austria.

¹¹ Data from the Labour Market Service (AMS) or Federation of Insurance Agencies are not standardised according to international definitions; data based on microcensus comply with international standards.

¹² Currently possible on a net base (based on consumer survey 1999/2000), as of 2002 possible on gross and net base (based on wage tax statistics).

¹³ Especially life expectancy, mortality, morbidity, lost years of life, infant mortality, vaccination rate, etc.

AUSTRIA AS A DYNAMIC BUSINESS LOCATION

Success through innovation and networking

The economic policy also plays a key role in the implementation of a sustainable development. By co-determining the economic framework conditions for the required structural change, it also co-determines the ecological and social consequences. The superior goal of a sustainable business location is to secure a qualitative economic growth that is decoupled from resource turnover, together with more and better jobs, social security, and a healthy and intact environment in the long term for present and future generations.

In order to secure the future of Austria as a business location and its international competitiveness, a high quality of production factors is of central importance. This requires social stability, a strong infrastructure, high innovation dynamics, high-quality human resources, and a stronger entrepreneurial spirit. In order to improve the qualitative location factors, incentives for the coordination and networking of business locations is necessary, allowing new supraregional models that take region-specific needs and suitability into account. Mobilising the creativity of employees and the innovation capacity of Austrian enterprises is a mutual challenge for economic, employment, budgetary and fiscal policy. In order to achieve a sustainable development, however, those structures in the economy and in society, in politics and in administration must be promoted that take the dynamics and complexity of our modern society into account with a high degree of adaptability and capacity to learn. Therefore, institutional innovations must always support self-organisation, improve the innovation capability, provide for reflectivity, and facilitate conflict regulation.

The dynamics of the market cannot be replaced. Customer orientation, competition, innovation and offensive technological development require maximum efficiency. Thereby, the basic prerequisites are macro-economic and social stability, more or less smooth functioning of the markets, and a high degree of corporate adaptation flexibility. With its social market economy, Europe has developed a political model that combines free market economy with social partnership and a social framework in a very successful synthesis. The high purchasing power resulting from widespread prosperity was the most important motor for the impressive economic growth rate. Consistent implementation of the principle of sustainability in all areas of the economy now demands a new quality of political and voluntary approaches. In order to exploit the market forces for the necessary increase in productivity of resources, the ecological and social costs of the consumption of nature must be internalised gradually. In future, sustainable behaviour must also have clear economic benefits – both for enterprises and for the consumers. Only then can practical implementation of the precautionary principle and an integrative approach to economic, social and ecological challenges succeed.

Sustainable development requires a stronger decoupling of energy and raw material consumption from economic growth: Only a sparing and gentle use of natural resources will preserve the life chances and scope of action for future generations. Eco-efficiency is also a principle of economic reason: Those who use increasingly short goods more efficiently will prevail over the competition. An additional positive effect thereby is an improved quality of workplaces. The necessary reduction in material and energy intensity of products and services will only have sustainable success, however, if the efficiency gains are not offset by an excessive increase in the consumption of resources. A sparing and gentle use of natural resources must therefore also be manifested in the lifestyle and consumption behaviour of every individual.

Key Objective 6 – Innovative Structures Promote Competitiveness

Need-oriented research, technology and development provide system solutions for innovations, structural and social change

Background / Problem

The economy is faced by the challenge of exploiting the growing dynamic of the markets, adapting products and services to the needs of people, securing know-how in the enterprises, and offering the employees jobs that will secure their existence and have future perspectives. Therefore, the competitiveness of Austria must be guaranteed by a high innovation capability in the enterprises. At the same time, there is great economic and ecological potential for optimisation of the value added chain from the exploitation of resources right through to the end users. The majority of resources taken from nature are not processed into products. Instead, they become waste and emissions, they are consumed as energy for processing and transportation, etc. The “best-available technologies” already on the market can improve the efficiency of resources by a factor of three to four. However, their use alone cannot guarantee a sustainable economy, since the savings they achieve are offset by the overall growth in economic processes. Where technological innovation was to the fore hitherto, integrated system solutions now create more scope for sustainable solutions and offer new chances for Austrian enterprises and for the business location Austria. An increase in the overall innovation dynamics and an orientation towards the model of sustainable development, eco-efficiency and need orientation in research and technology policies must therefore be strived for, so that Austria can become an innovation provider instead of a taker. The positive effects can be enhanced even further with appropriate framework conditions favourable to competition (in the field of fair trade, structural and location policy). The use of new technologies creates new scope for action, but also new social challenges. Especially in the development and use of technologies that can bind a high degree of resources, which have high inherent ecological, economic or social risks, and which can trigger irreversible developments (such as certain applications in genetic engineering), there must be a social dialogue on the impact and risks of technology.

Objective

To promote structures favourable to innovation, the share of thematically focussed programmes oriented towards the model of sustainable development must be increased continuously up to the year 2015 within the scope of R&D funding. The aim of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy is to catch up with the leaders in Europe with regard to the research quota, which is to be increased to 2.5% of GDP by 2005, and to establish the core issues of sustainable development (such as resource efficiency, space relevance, participative approaches, as well as inter- and transdisciplinarity) as guiding principles of national research policy. This should consolidate the cooperation between various actors in innovations systems such as e.g. research institutions and enterprises, support the

introduction of innovative products and services on the market, promote the start-up of new companies, and achieve a stronger need-orientation of R&D in the sense of product-service combinations.

Starting Points

The overall Austrian innovation system must guarantee that companies are supported in their sustainability-oriented innovation capacity – both by consolidating the innovation capability of existing companies and by supported new enterprises in placing the innovative products on the market. Innovation policy comprises

- further development of framework conditions favourable to innovation and networking with educational, qualification and infrastructure policies;
- support that sets a focus in operational research and development;
- stronger support for market introductions (e.g. the promotion of financial participation models for start-ups, start-up initiatives);
- support for a rapid diffusion of scientific basics and research results;
- timely initiation and moderation of a social discourse on the development, use and possible consequences of new technologies;
- an attractive location policy that consolidates Austria's role as an economic bridge to the candidates for EU membership.

Innovation potentials can only be exploited optimally if technological innovations are networked with structural and social innovations, and implemented as system solutions. Hitherto, such system solutions were only developed or offered rarely by individual enterprises, since they were frequently not detected, appeared to be too risky for an individual operation, or cannot be implemented without cooperation. With action programmes, such innovations can be promoted, joint ventures and networks between the economy, sciences and consumers or users can be initiated on a voluntary and informal basis, and system solutions can be developed into marketable products. This requires an expansion of the planning horizon and cooperative access for everyone involved in the innovation process.

- Cooperation between consumers and producers allows an optimisation of product use and integrated solutions without entailing lower revenues for the manufacturer. Such projects can be oriented towards social needs and problems, such as e.g. housing structure, work, mobility or energy supply. They thus also provide for more customer loyalty and are a guarantee factor for the continued existence of enterprises.
- With joint ventures between enterprises in the value added chain and between retailers and producers, the recycling aspects of products can be taken into account as early as in the design phase, research cooperation can be initiated, and the overall production benefit can be regarded in an integrated way.

- In research policy, further consolidation of the cooperation between research institutions and business is necessary in order to improve the implementation orientation of research activities and to accelerate the diffusion of research results. Moreover, the innovation policy must be regarded as a major strategy that networks the research and technology policy with other areas.
- In order to promote the breakthrough of eco-efficient technologies, the advantages of a high degree of flexibility, a regional base, a broadly diversified range, and a strong market position can be combined through joint ventures between small and medium-sized enterprises in the form of clusters.
- A better exploitation of regional strengths through regional and local cooperation offers innovation potentials by combining the core competences of several enterprises and consolidating them for a strategic development. This model of mutual provision of services, which is quite common in tourism, can be transferred to other sectors, and refined holistic service packages can be implemented.

In the integration of sustainability, knowledge and awareness of the employees (“capacity building”) plays a significant role in all enterprises, especially in the small and medium-sized ones. Only with more research and development – supported by the employees of a company – can products viable in the future be manufactured with new production technologies. This requires efficient use of the corporate know-how, willingness to learn and life-long learning, corporate and external further education offers, participative innovation processes (e.g. through a corporate proposal system or employee participation models), and a corporate culture based on creativity and sustainability. Participation as an element of work quality opens up further potentials for commitment and identification with the company on the operational level. This innovation orientation results in higher quality and more security of jobs, more employee satisfaction, and better international competitiveness of the Austrian economy.

Key Objective 7 – A New Understanding of Business and Administration

Strengthening corporate responsibility and creating efficient administrative structures and processes

Background / Problem

Sustainable development is only possible on the basis of a successful and competitive economy. Mutual understanding in partnership and the active involvement of all citizens and of the enterprises in dialogue, planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring coin a new political style. This requires a new self-image of the enterprises, which must accept their ecological and social responsibility in shaping the work world, products and services, in research and development, and in the use of technologies. Greater self-responsibility on the part of enterprises must be supported by the framework conditions of a policy that offers incentives for business start-ups and entrepreneurship. This allows and promotes a new self-image of administration, which can shape its structures and processes efficiently and in a customer-oriented way through service orientation, concentration of procedures, and a shorter duration of administrative procedures. Thus, frictional losses at the interface between society, economy and administration can be avoided, the motto “motivation instead of punishment” can be implemented, and self-audits and continuous improvement of business processes will make it possible to get away from the typical “command and control” policy. With more use of modern technologies, the exchange of information between authorities and enterprises should be improved, thus accelerating procedures and making them less bureaucratic. A more effective and more efficient implementation of the environmental laws already in place and better enforcement must be ensured in order to achieve a balance between the use of political and market economy instruments. After all, the commitment and motivation of business, administration and society are important conditions for the implementation of a sustainable economy.

Objective

The key objective of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy in the field of administration is to have a modern administration with simplified official channels and administrative procedures that are closer to the citizens (“one-stop-shop principle”). Access to the administration will be improved with the help of electronic media, and fulfilment of the tasks remaining after a streamlining of processes will be optimised. Concentration on the core functions of the state will make it possible to react quickly to new challenges. The new image of administration is expressed by the shift from a sovereign state to a service state that offers its citizens and the economy lean structures and fewer regulations, consulting services and service quality. This also includes the qualified further development of voluntary agreements between the public sector and enterprises or business sectors, as well as self-obligations in business and certifiable management systems, whereby compliance with the agreement and the

achievement of environmental quality targets must be ensured, and the transparency, protection of public interests and existing rights of third parties must remain guaranteed. Tried and tested existing management systems (EMAS, Ökoprofit (eco-profit programme), Responsible Care, ISO 14001) should be developed further in accordance with the principle of sustainability. Moreover, the establishment of a nationwide voluntary “sustainability reporting” system for enterprises by the year 2010 with concurrent simplification and acceleration of administrative procedures for these enterprises is planned.

Starting Points

Sustainable development is the common responsibility of all the actors (state, economy, citizens). Although this will not resolve conflicts of interests between social groups, win-win situations can be identified and exploited consistently, system solutions can be designed and implemented, and framework conditions for a constructive handling of social conflicts can be created. Especially at the interfaces between enterprises and the administration there are numerous starting points for this.

For the enterprises, sustainable economy means accepting responsibility for the economic, ecological and social consequences of their decisions and actions. Pro-active economic action therefore means perceiving one’s responsibility as a structural-political actor in shaping the range of offers, and offering resource-efficient products and services at competitive prices, promoting system solutions integrated through networks, promoting the use of best-available technologies, and orienting operational research and development towards the model of sustainable development. Thereby, far-reaching indirect impacts (e.g. through the purchase of Trans Fair products) must also be observed. Innovative enterprises will thus have an opportunity to free themselves from the pressure of having to orient themselves purely towards prices, standards and market requirements: They will be able to distinguish themselves as pioneers of change, to have a shaping influence on the competitive forces, and thus to acquire a greater scope for decision-making, action and design. With regard to the employees and consumers, sustainable economy means more economic and social responsibility on the one hand. On the other hand, more stable customer relationships, greater credibility and a stronger identification of employees with their company will result. This greater entrepreneurial responsibility must, however, go hand in hand with a simultaneous change in the incentive and control systems (as regulated e.g. in the Environmental Management Act) in order to enhance the motivation and commitment of business. In addition to steering instruments, this also requires a cooperative approach on the part of the administration. This new form of cooperation between authorities and businesses should also be taken into account when establishing the legal framework.

The special aspect of cooperative administrative action is that it does not take place as a sovereign process with unilateral decision-making on the part of the enforcement authorities, but rather requires collaboration with the parties concerned, and their voluntary participation. This has the advantage that mutual decisions do not require additional state enforcement efforts, since the parties involved bind themselves in voluntary self-obligations. The principle of “motivation instead of punishment” must become the guiding principle for the relationship between enterprises and the administration. Economic efficiency and customer orientation are more important, resulting in a shorter duration of procedures, more transparent competencies, and transparent decision-making. With a timely exchange of information, more consulting orientation on the part of the officials, and more mutual trust, planning processes can be improved at an earlier stage and more security can be achieved in the implementation of projects. With the concentration of competencies and contact partners on the part of the authorities, the cost of communication can be reduced for the businesses, and a holistic view of enterprises and projects is possible. Within the scope of legal compliance checks and through electronic data transfer between authorities and businesses, legal security can be enhanced while at the same time reducing the costs of control.

More intensive and better relationships between business and the administration can also be achieved with public private partnerships. These instruments are especially interesting with regard to community activities in the field of municipal services and infrastructure.

Key Objective 8 – Correct Prices for Resources and Energy

Creating incentives for sustainable behaviour through price signals

Background / Problem

In the interest of a sustainable development, prices should reflect the costs of resources and energy properly. Thus, what is sensible in terms of national economy will also be successful in terms of business administration, and incentives for a sustainable behaviour will be created. Thereby all those forces will be exploited that have led to innovations, technical progress and prosperity in the last decades – which corresponds with the structural shift towards a service-oriented society. The transition must be designed with consideration for social and economic compatibility, possible conflicts will have to be resolved, and the state will have to take responsibility in the form of moderation of this process. Through long-term, continuous and reliable lines of development with appropriate time frames for adjustment, the planning security for business, private individuals and the public sector is guaranteed.

Objective

Sustainability requires an internalisation of ecological and social costs. The key objective of the strategy is therefore to initiate the gradual implementation of a socially balanced, ecological tax reform and tax benefits by the year 2005. Thereby, the European context, the distribution aspects and the balance between ecological, economic and social targets must be taken into account.

Starting Points

Many of the misdevelopments so far result from the fact that environmental pollution, the consumption of resources and social costs have only a very low value in the calculation of production processes and thus in the pricing of a product. Therefore, it is important to find ways and means to value environmental burdens, nature consumption and social follow-up costs properly and under fair trade conditions. A gradual reform of the tax system designed for the long term and oriented towards sustainability is therefore an important political lever that will send out the right signals to the market. This includes the establishment of competitive benefits for renewable sources of energy by grading the taxes on sources of energy in accordance with the degree of environmental pollution (further development of the system of energy taxes and taxes on transport). The resulting price incentive and a certain degree of calculation security are important impulses for the necessary investments to consolidate the use of renewable sources of energy. The fulfilment of obligations in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol, more security in the energy supply for Austria and Europe, investment and employment effects in many regions and an improvement in the trade balance result in a bundle of environmental and economic advantages if implemented with responsibility.

Another significant aspect in making the tax system more ecological is a reduction of the high tax burden on the factor “labour” in exchange for higher taxation of resources. In the field of fiscal instruments, environmental duties must be imposed in conjunction with a reduction of ancillary wage costs or other duties. Thereby, the distribution aspects must be taken into account in order to pursue ecological, economic and social objectives at the same time. In addition to a socially and economically balanced, ecologically oriented tax reform, deposit systems and imputation of the disposal costs on decommissioning of an appliance or product into the purchase price can also make a significant contribution. The use of new economic instruments such as e.g. environmental liability or trade with emission licences must be investigated with a view to steering effect, effectiveness and contribution towards sustainable development.

Within the scope of the state and the provinces there are a multitude of promotion measures that must be investigated with regard to a sustainability strategy. Some of the most extreme examples of subsidies that are counterproductive for sustainability can only be resolved at the global or EU level, and must be tackled immediately.

In accordance with a sustainability strategy oriented towards a market economy, emphasis should be placed on correct price and cost signals. In the evaluation of subsidies and grants, the effects of indirect subsidies through tax exemption, tax allowances, cross-subsidising, etc. should be taken into account.

Due to the dramatic increases in traffic and the resulting environmental pollution, the transport sector is a field of action with top priority in the Austrian Sustainability Strategy. In the use of economic instruments, the objective is to variabilise the costs and internalise external costs (e.g. road tolls, parking fees, eco-points system). It is necessary to aim for more differentiation in the standard consumption duty, and to introduce road pricing for heavy goods vehicles on major roads. Thereby, a gradual adjustment and reform of the mineral oil tax would also be possible, taking the neighbouring countries into consideration. The use of alternative fuel technologies (using renewable raw materials, etc.) and alternative drive technologies (such as the fuel cell) must be promoted with a view to ecobalances. The transport-relevant public funding system should be adjusted to meet the requirements of a sustainable development. The environmental promotion instruments for operational mobility and transport measures should be used more. At the international level, Austria will continue to fight for more cost equity in transport (e.g. road pricing, emission certificates) and to support a European transport policy that guarantees regional, natural and social compatibility and a sustainable economic development. For this purpose, initiatives for a reorientation of the EU directive on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures must be established at the EU level with the aim of burdening the road freight sector not only with the construction and maintenance costs, but also with the external environmental costs, costs

of accidents and costs of congestion, as well as allowing the cross-financing of alternative forms of transport especially in sensitive areas. For Austria, the time factor is of greatest importance in this context. In accordance with the conclusions of the European Council in Gothenburg, it must be assured by 2004 that the prices for using the various forms of transport will reflect the costs for society more accurately. Against the backdrop of EU enlargement and in view of the anticipated increases in traffic, it is important to act as quickly as possible in the interest of assuring the protection of environment and population, to develop appropriate proposals for legislative action, and to guarantee the implementation of these community directives without delay. With a nationally and internationally coordinated traffic flow management, the existing transport routes should be used optimally and individual burdens should be avoided – in conjunction with the objective of reducing the dramatic growth rates in transport as quickly as possible.

The capital markets are a factor of central influence on business decisions. Therefore, they can also be used to achieve a structural shift towards sustainability. The about 20 eco and ethic funds available in the German-speaking world have so far made exceptionally high profits. The trend for private investors to look not only at the profits but also at the ethical and ecological quality of their securities must be reinforced with appropriate information and public relations work. This requires benchmarking systems that also take the dynamic principle of sustainability into account. The consideration of sustainable securities in the investment policy of institutional investors and the acknowledgement of management systems as a factor that reduces risk (and thus increases the creditworthiness) could also set clear impulses for a sustainable economy in Austria.

Key Objective 9 – Successful Management Through Eco-efficiency

Decoupling the consumption of resources and energy from economic growth even further – promoting the use of renewable raw materials and sources of energy more strongly

Background / Problem

More than one third of the non-renewable resources including the sources of energy that we know today have already been used up. Although economic growth and the consumption of energy have been decoupled in some sectors in recent years, fast and significant advances are still necessary in order to establish this trend in all sectors and to achieve an absolute reduction of raw material and energy consumption. The climate change, accelerated by greenhouse emissions, also makes it necessary to take fast and determined steps to prevent irreversible changes. This means that a further marked increase in the efficiency of resources, responsible closing of material cycles, and as widespread a use of renewable raw materials and energy sources as possible is necessary. If this is taken into account in the design of production processes, products, services and infrastructures, it will offer an opportunity to increase the value added and employment rate in Austria, to exploit regional location advantages, and to achieve export successes with eco-efficient and sustainable technologies. More intelligent, less resource-intensive and use-optimised products can create jobs of a better quality and achieve positive regional employment effects. The efficiency of resources as well as the use of regional renewable raw materials and energy sources can contribute towards reducing the dependence on imports, and thus enhance the competitiveness of Austria and its businesses.

Objective

The key objective is to increase the productivity of resources together with higher economic growth in such a way as to achieve a further decoupling. In the short term, absolute resource turnover should at least be stabilised, and in the long term the objective must be to increase the productivity of resources by a factor of 4. Thereby, the prevention of raw material and energy consumption has absolute priority wherever this is technically feasible and economically reasonable, with the ultimate goal of achieving an absolute reduction in total resource consumption. In energy policy, the two most important strategies will be to increase energy efficiency and to promote renewable energy sources: In the energy sector, the objective – in accordance with the resolution by the Council on December 7, 1998, on energy efficiency in the European Community, which sees this as an “ambitious goal” – will be to achieve an improvement in energy intensity by an average of one percentage point per year over and beyond the anticipated level (reference base: average 1990 – 1997 for the EU in total of minus 0.6% per year, taking climatic and economic developments into account). In addition, the share of renewable energy sources in Austria is to be increased from the current level of 23% by about one percentage point per year by the target period 2008 to

2012. Thereby, the macro-economic impacts and reasonable cost-benefit ratios must be taken into consideration. National, regional and operational resource and information management, as well as material flow balances should provide the basis for optimising the overall system and for closing cycles. The federal government fully supports the establishment of an international agency for renewable energy with offices in Austria.

Starting Points

Eco-efficient management means increasing the economic success and at the same time reducing the specific energy and raw material consumption. Thereby, integrated product policy, service concepts and cleaner production are important approaches. What is ecologically sensible will thus also contribute towards the profits of the companies. Eco-efficiency is a management philosophy that calls for innovation and creativity in all areas:

- The use of renewable raw materials requires the conception and development of tailor-made products and product lines in technology and application. This requires exemplary vendor-user cooperation in the regional context, the development of new quality profiles and technologies for using the specific structural properties of renewable raw materials in production and product development. Therefore, the technology and innovation policy must create the conditions for a widespread intelligent use of renewable raw materials of optimised quality, especially as energy sources, as building materials, and for the production of basic substances in industry, and innovative products must be made marketable as quickly as possible.
- A switch to production technologies in accordance with Cleaner Production results in a marked increase in the efficiency of raw material and energy input, minimised use of toxic substances, and a reduction in production waste. The use of non-renewable resources should be optimised by cascading the use of raw materials, by establishing multi-functional use concepts for raw materials, by exploiting combined heat and power production, and by using waste to produce energy.
- A stronger integration of production and services contributes towards the implementation of a sustainable economy. The service sector has the opportunity to offer not only individual products but also, with the help of highly qualified personnel, to offer new technologies in a holistic use concept.
- With regional cooperation between companies networks can be created, in which the waste from one company can be used as a raw material by another company. Pro-active management of these material flows between companies can result in reductions by up to 90% compared with a non-networked procedure. One of the most important conditions for this is further development of the waste management framework conditions, in order to promote re-use and recycling not only within companies but also between companies.

The necessary quantum leap in eco-efficiency cannot be achieved by the commitment of businesses alone. Consumers and the state are also called upon to make their contribution with framework conditions and demand impulses:

- It is urgently necessary to decouple economic growth from traffic growth to counteract the massive increase in CO₂ emissions in recent years. For this, a comprehensive package of measures (such as e.g. efficiency increases in drive technologies and transport systems, re-orientation of zoning, awareness building, internalisation of external costs) is necessary.
- In energy policy, the two most important strategies will be to increase energy efficiency and to promote renewable energy sources. Therefore, attractive framework conditions for eco-energy must be developed further (e.g. investment support, improved market conditions) in order to be able to continue meeting the demand in future, and to an increasing degree with renewable energy sources from the region. The growth in power demand must be slowed down. With an energy efficiency programme, production growth and energy consumption must be decoupled in all areas.
- A sustainable waste management must aim to promote sparing use of resources by avoiding and recycling waste within the ecological context, by guaranteeing ecologically compatible waste processing, by registering material flows, by using recycling materials, and by closing the material cycles. Since the measures to increase energy efficiency in sorted waste collection have meanwhile been exhausted, suitable treatment capacities for residual waste and for the residues from recycling of the waste collected separately or later sorted must be provided. Waste management, in particular untreated waste deposits in landfills, causes considerable methane emissions; therefore an essential contribution towards climate protection can be made by redesigning and exploiting the energy content of waste. Nationwide waste treatment with reduced emission of greenhouse-relevant gases is therefore an imperative and urgent step. Thermal treatment plants for residual waste with concurrent power generation and heat production should be promoted in future. The quantitative and qualitative problems of waste management can only be solved together with the entire economic system (both production and consumption). Many problems occur because the waste phase of the product is not taken into account during the production phase. Therefore, waste management cannot be limited to disposal management alone. Measures that will only have an effect as “end-of-pipe” solutions can only be sub-optimal solutions to the overall problem. For a sustainable influence on the total material balance, however, knowledge of the overall material flow and an integrated product policy are necessary. The introduction of an efficient electronic data management with a constant data collection volume is an important condition for a sustainable waste management.
- In the building sector, continuous efficiency gains through stricter specifications in the construction code and housing promotion must be aimed for, and innovative forms of

financing (e.g. contracting) and the renovation of old buildings must continue to be promoted. The regional bodies must play an exemplary role thereby.

- In the field of agriculture and forestry, there are still more expansion possibilities for the production of renewable raw materials: With 47% of the federal surface covered by forests, timber production has a special importance. Since only about two thirds of the annual increase in wood are used, there are still considerable potentials for use. A sustainable forest management guarantees that this raw material base will not be exhausted and that with the use of CO₂-neutral renewable raw materials the consumption of fossil energy sources and non-renewable raw materials will be reduced, thus contributing massively towards climate protection.

A prerequisite for increasing eco-efficiency is sufficient information that allows a comprehensive assessment of the prosperity of the Austrian national economy (macro level), support in investment and purchase decisions (micro level), and supports the building of awareness. Thus, a better level of information about the “ecological rucksack” of products, raw materials and energy carriers will be created and the migration of problems to other countries will be prevented. For the evaluation of companies, appropriate indicator systems must be developed and established (e.g. Dow Jones Sustainability Group Index) in order to exploit the powers of the capital market for sustainable development.

Key Objective 10 – Strengthening Sustainable Products and Services

Setting impulses for a higher market share for sustainable products and services and promoting sustainable tourism

Background / Problem

Public and private consumers also have a responsibility for sustainable development in their choice of products and services, in the use and disposal of goods. Through a change in values and lifestyles, quality, lower consumption, regionality, social compatibility, repair-friendliness and upgradability should become central criteria for purchase decisions and use behaviour, with the aim of achieving a less resource- and energy-intensive lifestyle. However, this also requires a range of products that is transparent, adequate and affordable. More demand for fairly produced and fairly traded products is also in accordance with Austria's international responsibility towards developing countries. Thus, sustainable development means more quality of life with a lower consumption of resources. The most important structural element thereby is a shift from the purchase of products to the use of integrated services.

This approach is also very important in the tourism and leisure industry, especially considering that this particularly location-bound industry consists of the consumption of integrated services in itself. Austria is a traditional tourism destination that is positioned through culture, authenticity and beautiful landscapes in international competition. In international travel, Austria is one of the most tourism-intensive countries in the world. Improved quality, preservation of cultural diversity, of the cultural heritage, and preservation of the environment are therefore the ways in which the international competitiveness and thus the economic, ecological and social future of Austrian tourism can be secured.

Objective

The key objective of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy is to achieve a continuous increase in the market share of products and services with less resource and energy consumption. The further propagation of sustainable products and services will be promoted and facilitated with incentives, particularly in the areas "food", "housing", "consumer goods", and "tourism and leisure", by expanding existing model projects and support programmes and by reinforced use of the Austrian eco-label for tourism (including the eco-label for tourism businesses), thus securing jobs into the bargain. Within the scope of public procurement, the criterion of "environmentally friendly services" is an integral condition for award of contract. In order to achieve a sustainable development in the tourism and leisure industry, it is necessary to secure the cultural and natural bases in the long term, and an integrative design of ecologically, economically and socially compatible as well as culturally attractive recreation and adventure offers is required. Since the tourism and leisure industry is classical cross-

section material, we cannot speak of a sustainable tourism development as such. It is much rather necessary to implement the dimensions of a sustainable development and to develop a comprehensive national strategy for this. The development of an operational measurement system in the form of a process-oriented evaluation scale for the assessment of sustainable tourism development at the regional level will play an important role in this context.

Starting Points

The further dissemination of sustainable products and services will be promoted and facilitated by incentives, particularly in the following need areas, by expanding existing model projects and support programmes:

- **Food:** Decisive for a development towards sustainability in Austrian agriculture was the implementation of the Austrian agro-environmental programme (ÖPUL), which created financial incentives for a renunciation of mineral fertilisers and pesticides, for use of surfaces close to the environment, crop rotation and fallows, and which took the multi-functionality of agriculture into account. Attention must be paid to the multi-functionality of agriculture in future, too, since especially in the alpine regions it provides important services in the preservation of landscape that are not compensated by product revenues. In agricultural policy, the preservation and expansion of positive environmental impacts (preservation and creation of new landscape elements, cultivation of ecologically valuable surfaces, etc.) and a further reduction of the negative environmental impacts of agricultural activities (use of pesticides, mineral fertilisers, leaching of nutrients, soil erosion), promotion of organic agriculture and other environmentally friendly management methods, the further development of ecological evaluation of agricultural subsidies, and preservation of the agricultural use of areas with marginal revenues must be to the fore. The aim is to achieve an agriculture with low material and energy input. Moreover, the framework conditions for preserving cultivated plant species through more promotion of cooperation between the public and private sector and through monitoring of the Austrian cultivated species must be improved, national minimum standards for animal husbandry must be defined that should also be implemented at the European level, and the cultivation of ecological Austrian feed plants must be promoted. With direct marketing and a successful positioning of trademarks, attractive demand segments for organically produced foods have been created. Thus, a marked increase in the market share of products from organic agriculture should be achieved. With a share of about 10%, Austria has the highest share of organic farmers within the EU. The existing subsidy system should be investigated for sustainability at the national and EU level, and should be adjusted accordingly wherever necessary. A preference for regional and seasonal foods reduces the need for transportation, and an increased demand for fairly produced and fairly traded products complies with Austria's international responsibility towards the third

world. With regard to the use of genetic engineering in the food sector, the consumers' freedom of choice must be guaranteed by clear and consistent labelling.

- **Housing:** Housing is one of the basic needs of human beings. However, in recent decades our demands have risen continuously. In future, the demand for resources and energy in the construction and use of buildings should be reduced and covered increasingly by renewable sources or with increased use of recycled building materials. In urban development, space-saving housing construction should be preferred due to its system-immanent advantages with regard to specific energy consumption and mobility needs. An improved market transparency is to be achieved with the use of energy certificates for buildings. Moreover, further sealing of surfaces is to be prevented (e.g. through space-saving construction and conurbation), the resource and energy demand of buildings is to be reduced (e.g. thermal insulation, restoration of old buildings), and the mobility need is to be reduced by a mix of different uses (housing, work, leisure) and fulfilled by public transport. Thereby, the special needs of various age and social groups must also be taken into account (designed for children, elderly people and the disabled), and attention must be paid to diversity and flexibility of the environment. Another factor that must be taken into account is the affordability of sustainable housing for the socially deprived. Housing subsidies should be reformed as a target-oriented instrument to promote sustainable housing.
- **Consumer goods:** The Austrian environmental mark and the eco-labels established by NGOs and companies have already opened up attractive market niches in recent years. The credibility of marks of excellence is to be guaranteed by few but clearly defined quality marks. Better information about the environmental impacts in pre-production should allow an integrative assessment of the "ecological backpacks" of consumer goods. With public relations measures, consumers and citizens should be made aware of local offers from their region and sustainable products should be positioned with the feature "quality of life". This should pave the way from the eco-niche to the mass market for appropriate products, whereby the specific role of the retail trade must be taken into consideration.

- Tourism and leisure: This focal sector comprises significant aspects of sustainability. Within the scope of the ecological dimension, environmentally friendly production and consumption processes must be mentioned throughout the entire tourism value added chain, as well as the sustainable management and conservation of natural resources or of the cultural heritage. Thereby, the economic dimension includes objectives like designing a competitive tourism industry while at the same time maintaining the business structures typical of Austrian tourism, the availability of labour and production factors, or the creation of demand for a sustainable tourism package. The number and quality of jobs, opportunities for education and further education, the contribution to be made to the development of understanding between nations, but also respect for the countries that we travel to and their population are objectives that are reflected by the social dimension.

Six premises of action can be derived from these starting points:

1. Intact living spaces and natural spaces are the prerequisite for tourism in the future;
2. Tourism is an integral part of a sustainable, region-specific networked economy;
3. The image of holiday regions is coined by self-determined cultural dynamics, authenticity and social satisfaction of the population and of those employed in tourism;
4. Intensively used tourism destinations develop and implement operational and communal environmental management systems and sustainability strategies;
5. The human being is to the fore as the addressee of tourism policy;
6. The departure points for tourism in conurbations and superordinate political systems accept responsibility for the effects of tourism on the destinations.

At the regional level, a number of destinations have already created attractive service packages for sustainable tourism, in which the regional economy and preservation of the landscape have been integrated in the overall concept. With increased public relations work and the initiation of joint ventures between tourism businesses, tour operators, regional tourism associations and the local population, environmental quality, health, wellness and regional individuality are to be positioned as the marks of excellence of a holiday in Austria.

The Federal Ministry of Economy and Labour is currently implementing concrete projects and initiatives in the field of holiday equalisation at the European level, model projects for gentle mobility, national parks, code of ethics, barrier-free travel, education and further education measures and enhancement of the image of jobs in tourism, etc. With the successful Austrian environmental mark for tourism businesses, a standardised national quality mark for hotels and catering businesses was already created several years ago. Moreover, the Federal Ministry of Economy and Labour has also established the working group “Sustainable Tourism Development” with representatives from all of the provinces.

A special challenge will be integration of the existing individual initiatives in an overall concept for a sustainable lifestyle. For this purpose, the existing criteria for sustainability in the need areas indicated above will have to be developed further. The scientific foundations established within the scope of focus programmes will have to be supplemented meaningfully by target group-oriented action programmes that also take inhibiting factors like lack of information, lack of acceptance, lack of time or price barriers into account.

Indicators

- R&D expenditure¹
- Environmental taxes²
- Taxes on labour
- Material input³
- Consumption of landscape
- Energy consumption in relation to GDP (total primary energy supply and total final energy consumption)
- Share of renewable energy sources in total primary energy supply
- Net import tangent of energy supply
- Waste⁴
- Number of products with eco-label
- Number of EMAS and ISO 14001 sites⁵

¹ Total R&D expenditure, broken down by state, enterprise and others (GERD/BIP and BERD/BIP).

² According to OECD definition

³ From the material flow account

⁴ In accordance with the Federal Waste Management Plan

⁵ To monitor the key objectives “A new understanding of business and administration” and “Strengthening sustainable products and services”, indicators (such as: number of businesses that implement “sustainability reporting”; average duration of an administrative procedure; number and volume of contracting awards in the public sector; number of invitations for tenders or procurement processes in which “environmental compatibility of the service” was included as a criterion, etc.) must be developed further.

LIVING SPACES IN AUSTRIA

Protection of diversity and quality

With its geographical location, Austria has a great diversity of living spaces that are characterised by a partly unique flora and fauna, but also by different living and economic conditions – both factors that have a significant influence on the quality of life of the local population. It is a declared objective of the Sustainability Strategy to secure this diversity of living spaces, i.e. to preserve and improve the living conditions in the various regions with consideration of the relevant features for man and nature in the long term.

This means on the one hand the preservation of natural resources (air, water, soil, fauna and flora, cultivated landscape) in the sense of an integrated nature conservation, whereby special protection must be afforded to those ecologically sensitive regions of Austria that are threatened by a high anthropogenic burden (e.g. by the transport sector).

But it also requires consideration and support for the special regional characteristics: The diversity of the various living spaces for nature and man can only be complied with through strong regional orientation combined with special efforts to consolidate the rural areas. This also means that with a “regional planning of short distances” the existential needs (housing, work, food, leisure, consumption, education) can be met in the immediate neighbourhood again. In this way, local supply should be guaranteed throughout the whole of Austria, and at the same time mobility pressures that impair the quality of life should be eliminated. Modified patterns of space utilisation and mobility, as well as production and consumption structures should reduce the transport needs and make a considerable contribution towards decoupling economic growth from traffic growth. The prerequisite for this is an integrative regional and transport planning both at the regional and at the urban level.

And last but not least, it is necessary to involve the population more strongly in the shaping of their living space. This is particularly important because there is a very close relationship between the living space and the lifestyle of the population. Shaping the living space always means shaping the lifestyle as well. Thereby, specific opportunities for participation in the development of their own living space should be created for all groups of society. New processes, structures and institutions should make participation by all the actors concerned possible. In the field of communal planning, this means taking the next step from expert planning to dialogue planning. Thereby the Local Agenda 21 forms the core of the considerations. It does not replace other instruments, but rather serves as an integration platform that is specifically networked with other sustainability-relevant approaches such as rural village revival, Climate Alliance, communal and regional planning concepts and regional development to form an overall strategy. At the core of the efforts is the reinforcement of self-responsibility: The creation of new jobs, the consolidation of local economic cycles, the

improvement of social togetherness. Therefore, framework conditions and support mechanisms for a new bottom-up culture must be created on the basis of interaction between local/regional sustainability strategies on the one hand and the national sustainability strategy on the other hand.

Key Objective 11 – Protection of Environmental Media and Climate

Quality targets and a responsible material policy

Background / Problem

A dynamic economy and social fairness can only be sustainable if the quality of soil, water and air is protected permanently, and if globally effective strategies to minimise man-made climate changes are implemented. Protection of the soil and a sustainable use of the valuable resource water are central issues for Austria in order to preserve the functionality and availability of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in a qualitative and quantitative respect, and to make these fundamentals of life permanently available to future generations as well. The environmental policy over the last decades has resulted in a marked reduction of pollutants, risk management measures for hazardous substances, and reduced pollution of environmental media. Partly due to a lack of harmonised environmental quality targets, however, toxic or persistent substances continue to pollute the soil, groundwater and surface water, which can impair the ecological functionality significantly and accumulate in environmental media as well as in the food chain. The hazard potential of many substances is still unknown, so that the impact of their use on organisms and living spaces cannot be assessed and minimised accordingly yet. Austria has numerous ecologically sensitive regions, so that special protection measures are necessary. The global development of greenhouse gas emissions due to human activities is still in contrast to the targets of the Climate Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Austria as an industrialised nation is also called upon to reduce its emissions significantly and to contribute towards a decrease in man-made interference with the climate system.

Objective

The key objective for sustainable development is quantitative and qualitative protection of soil, water and air, as well as achievement of the national reduction goal of 13% lower climate-relevant gas emissions in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol. To protect the environmental media, both basic scientific and problem solving-oriented research and a nationwide system of environmental quality targets are necessary. The threat to sensitive animal and plant species and their habitats must receive special attention. A reduced input of substances and compounds with a high risk potential must be promoted on the basis of risk assessments. Substances with a higher risk must be replaced by those with a lower risk. A major test criterion for the use of hazardous substances is their degradability.

Starting Points

The precautionary principle, ecological compatibility, and the preservation of natural resources are central objectives of sustainable development and are reflected by the consistent protection of environmental media and in climate protection. Therefore, the following starting

points for this key objective must be viewed in close connection with the two subsequent key objectives on the protection of species and landscape and on the use of space.

- In climate protection, the long-term objective of stabilising the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (i.e. stabilising the CO₂ concentration at less than 550 ppm) is defined in Article 2 of the Framework Agreement of the United Nations. A first step in this direction is the achievement of the Kyoto target. In Kyoto, the European Union and its member states agreed to reduce the six major greenhouse gases (CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, H-FHC, PFHC, SF₆) by 8%, in the EU-internal burden sharing agreement Austria agreed to a reduction by -13% compared with 1990 (respectively 1995 for H-FHC, PFHC and SF₆) by the year 2008/2012. This requires that the Austrian Climate Strategy, an integral part of the cross-sector sustainability strategy, be implemented. Moreover, newly appropriated funds in the current budget and from the existing housing funds as well as a marked reduction of traffic emissions are necessary. The Climate Alliance target adopted by all the Austrian provinces provides for a reduction of CO₂ emissions by half compared with 1987 at the regional and local level by the year 2010.
- For Austria, protecting the water resources and making them permanently available to future generations means achieving the goal of preserving the drinking water quality of the groundwater. This requires that the natural quality of streams and rivers be ensured, and that the efficient deployment of funds in residential water management while preserving the nationwide supply and disposal system and high environmental standards be guaranteed. The aim is a long-term guarantee of sovereignty in the field of water resources and water management, equilibrium in the water balance of natural systems, and securing the water supply for the Austrian population, the economy and agriculture. Protection against natural hazards must be secured financially, and an ecological shaping of river courses, banks and flood zones must have priority over concrete structures wherever possible. At the European level, the principle of unanimity in the management of water resources must be maintained, and cooperation in the field of water management in supraregional river basins (Danube, Rhine, Elbe) must be strengthened.
- To protect the air, national maximum emission levels for SO₂, NO_x, VOC and NH₃ in accordance with the EU National Emissions Ceilings Directive must be complied with by the year 2010. A reduction of the current ozone burden is imperative with a view to both possible interaction effects with other pollutants (especially for risk groups such as children, asthma patients) and chronic health impairments that cannot be excluded, and especially with a view to long-term damage to the vegetation. Compliance with the relevant air quality targets with regard to ozone can only be guaranteed with a marked reduction in the emission of ozone precursors, and in accordance with the target set down in ozone legislation this means a reduction of NO_x and VOX by 70% compared with the values for 1985 and 1988.

- In order to guarantee an effective soil protection, further sealing of the valuable resource soil must be avoided, soil fertility must be secured by erosion-inhibiting measures and an ecologically oriented agriculture, penetration of hazardous substances into ecosystems and the food chain must be prevented, and hazards emanating from landfills must be minimised by compulsory pre-treatment of the waste.
- In chemicals policy, risk analyses based on scientific findings as the background for purchase decisions, transparent documentation of the hazards for human health and the environment associated with chemical products, and public access to information are necessary. In the operative anchorage of the precautionary principle for market access of chemical products, the European context must also be observed: Only products with sufficiently documented effects on health and the environment should be marketed. In addition, a mix of financial, institutional and technical instruments within the scope of introducing new technologies should be offered with a focus on communication and transfer of know-how (e.g. chemical leasing and product service systems). This aims at faster market penetration of products and technologies with an enhanced ecological profile.

Key Objective 12 – Preserving the Diversity of Species and Landscapes

Preserving animal and plant species, living spaces, natural and cultivated landscapes

Background / Problem

A loss of landscape diversity and biodiversity threatens the interests of future generations, and limits their development potentials. Austria has a rich diversity of animal and plant species, living spaces worth protection, natural and cultivated landscapes, the long-term preservation and sustainable development of which must be secured. For they are the heritage of future generations, they offer space for housing, work and leisure, they create identification with the region, and they are an economic factor themselves. Thereby, an extensive, ecologically oriented agriculture will continue to play an important role.

Objective

The key objective for a sustainable development is the nationwide protection of species and living spaces, of natural and cultural landscapes. To achieve this, focus research programmes must be developed further and implemented in cooperation with the relevant users of space. By the year 2004, all the Natura 2000 nominations technically required in accordance with the Fauna-Flora-Habitat Directive and the Bird Protection Directive must be implemented, appropriate management plans must be drawn up and implemented by 2006. Apart from the Natura 2000 regions, regionally differentiated biodiversity guidelines and regional management concepts must be developed and implemented nationwide by the year 2010. The necessary balance of interests must be achieved within the scope of discussion platforms at the regional and local level, whereby a sufficient regional support, integration processes for the affected population and further implementation measures must be guaranteed. The biodiversity of autochthon species must not decrease any further. The diversity, as well as the functionality and development capacity of natural living spaces must be secured.

Starting Points

In order to provide a sufficient and representative protection for biological diversity, the technical foundations must be prepared by continuing the biotope mapping according to harmonised criteria and by developing a national system for biodiversity monitoring. The preparation and updating of Red Lists with endangered species (including cultivated plants and domestic animals) and endangered habitats in Austria is a further basis. Based on this stocktaking, the genetic resources of cultivated plants, domestic animals, and wild animals and plants must be preserved and natural habitats and species also need to be protected outside the protection zones. In the course of a qualitative and quantitative expansion of protection zones (e.g. national and nature parks, Ramsar protection zones), innovative

concepts for contractual nature conservation and eco-sponsoring should be developed and implemented. The import and dissemination of non-indigenous species that endanger the ecosystems, habitats or species must be controlled or prevented wherever possible. This requires the implementation, evaluation and further development of the National Strategy for Biodiversity. Active participation by Austria in the process for a pan-European biodiversity strategy is a necessary objective.

A richly structured landscape is the prerequisite for biological diversity. Impoverished ecosystems mean not only a loss of culture and biodiversity; they are also susceptible to various influence factors, which may have negative consequences for future generations. The preservation and protection of a richly structured cultivated landscape and of biological diversity are therefore necessary. To achieve this, a harmonised nature conservation and biodiversity policy is necessary that comprises federal and provincial competences, national and nature parks as well as the UNESCO protection zones, that takes nature and landscape conservation adequately into account in all sectoral policies and relevant legal materials, and that pursues participative approaches. The results of the research programme “Cultivated Landscape Research” must be implemented consistently in collaboration with the local actors.

Austria’s cultivated landscape has resulted from extensive management. However, this can only be secured if the income of the farmers is sufficient for an economic existence and the environmental services thereby provided are compensated adequately.

The further expansion of forestry policy instruments based on broad interdisciplinary, inter-sector collaboration and the development of a national forestry programme for Austria serve to achieve sustainable forestry. Thereby, long-term improvement in the socio-cultural capacity of the forests is to be achieved by optimising the forests’ functions as a protection from natural hazards, improving the instruments for balancing the various interests in the forests, and the expansion of job opportunities in rural areas. The economic capacity of the forests is to be achieved by better use of the available timber resources, expansion of the use of wood as a renewable, environmentally friendly raw material, and diversification of the range of products and services offered by forests. Improving the ecological quality of the forests serves to preserve and enlarge the biological diversity in the forests, and to protect and improve their health and vitality.

Key Objective 13 – Responsible Use of Land and Regional Development

Orienting and tuning the space-relevant policies towards more quality of life

Background / Problem

Space is an asset that is extremely short and cannot be reproduced, and which has always been the subject of strong conflicts with regard to utilisation. Moreover, space-relevant decisions have long-term effects that make after-care virtually impossible. Therefore, application of the precautionary principle is imperative. Responsible use of space with a democratic balance of interests must stop the trend towards uncontrolled urban sprawl and permanent sealing of surfaces. In Austria, an average of 25 hectares of land are irretrievably lost due to construction measures and expansion of the transport infrastructure every day. A more sustainable use of the resource space, implementation of the principle of short distances, a mix of functions, the protection of valuable surfaces not built upon, reinforcement of regional factors, better coordination of space-relevant policies, enhancement of the quality of life, preservation of valuable structures and an expansion of participative elements are therefore necessary.

Objective

The key objective is the preservation of diversity and of the natural foundations of the landscape and its ecosystems, as well as the cultural and economic diversity of land use based thereon. A central prerequisite for this are intact socio-economic structures. Therefore, Local and Regional Agenda 21 processes must be reinforced and promoted as future-oriented, participative strategies by all the relevant actors within the scope of their possibilities. By the year 2010, binding landscape models with networking of all the relevant planning disciplines must be developed for the entire nation, and if necessary they must be coordinated across the borders of the provinces. Further development of these models should be guaranteed by accompanying evaluations. Financial transfers and regional subsidisation policies must be reviewed critically with a view to sustainable regional development. Thus, a reduction in the increase of permanently sealed surfaces to a maximum of one tenth of the current growth rate should be achieved by the year 2010.

Starting Points

In the future it will still be one of the central tasks of regional planning to ensure a location optimisation for the socio-economically necessary, resource-consuming uses that takes all the relevant aspects of sustainability into account. Binding regional and/or local boundaries must be set for regional developments that are not sustainable. With centrally defined targets and a high degree of autonomy in implementation, general guidance of a sustainable

development must be guaranteed while at the same time allowing for region-specific adaptations. This requires that the overlapping competences in the fields of regional planning and nature conservation be adapted, sector perspectives be combined in an integrative approach, and functional units be created (e.g. by joining up tourism regions). The current practice of assessing the impacts of potential uses in the course of site evaluation (e.g. regional impact assessments in the course of zoning) can be expanded even further in the individual case in order to achieve a sustainable, resource-sparing regional development.

- With greenbelt, landscape and urban planning, an uncontrolled urban spread into the surrounding countryside must be prevented. With urban revitalisation, promotion of local supply, local recreation areas and cultural offers, it was possible to preserve the attractiveness of urban spaces and to stop the international trend of dying out city centres. In order to counteract further uncontrolled urban spread, local zoning should be integrated more strongly in the superordinate spatial planning, and superordinate regional planning should be made binding. In zoning planning, quantitative targets for future population numbers, the housing space needs and the medium- to long-term financial planning must be taken into account and coordinated with superordinate regional planning.
- The targeted reduction in the growth rate of permanently sealed surfaces is to be achieved in coordination with the requirements of Austrian enterprises in international location competition by reducing excess building land, freezing building land reserves, with an active building land policy by the public sector, by promoting the restoration of old buildings, with preferential support for surface-sparing construction forms, and by “surface recycling”. With more density of construction, a higher intensity and efficiency of surface use is to be made possible and optimal exploitation of the use potentials in areas already built up is to be guaranteed. This in turn is the foundation for an economically relevant availability of public transport. Regional and transport planning must be coupled with each other.
- The aim of regional and economic policy is to establish a regionally balanced town-country ratio consisting of functionally independent and economically stable rural areas and vital towns without uncontrolled growth. In accordance with the development model of “decentralised concentration”, small-scale agglomerations in housing, business and infrastructure are to be created and arranged in such a way as to provide a system of regional conurbations. This model is to be achieved with specific support programmes for structurally weak regions, active employment policy, and education mainstreaming activities (e.g. technical colleges) that are oriented towards the specific regional needs. This reduces the rural exodus and supports the further development of disadvantaged regions. Thus a distribution of the locations for life functions (housing, work, leisure, supply, education, communication) should be achieved with the least possible traffic flows, material and energy flows, and an adequate housing density achieved so that essential services will find a population potential in their regions that guarantees a

profitable operation. In addition, spatial and social segregation should be avoided and the local or regional autonomy (also in the sense of active crisis prevention) increased.

- In the planning and design of local and regional infrastructure, the resulting consumption habits must be taken into consideration. Small-scale networking, joint use of consumer goods (sharing models), multiple use (housing, work, leisure), consideration for the special needs of children, the disabled and the elderly, local transport and local supply should be to the fore in future urban and landscape planning. In this context, the strategic environmental impact assessment plays a significant role as an integration and test instrument for all strategic decision-making levels.
- With sustainable management, the relationship between business and the region can be enhanced, regional jobs created and the cycles of raw materials, waste, products and purchasing power closed. Thus, regional proximity will also become a competitive factor in business, creating a strong regional basis as a counterbalance to the anonymous influences of the world market and at the same time contributing towards a reduction in traffic. With a diversity of networks of regionally integrated functions, small-scale decentralised supply with goods and services “from the region for the region” is to be assured. Attractive local offers, long-lasting labour policy effects for the rural population and a stronger identification with the region should reduce the exodus from structurally weak regions and preserve the settlement of disadvantaged regions. With more density of construction, a higher intensity and efficiency of surface use is to be made possible and optimal exploitation of the utilisation potentials in areas already built up is to be guaranteed. This in turn is the foundation for an economically meaningful development with public transport.
- Thereby, the policy of rural development, which is aimed at promoting the economic performance, social balance and positive environmental services in the rural region as a whole, plays a special role. It supports both an adjustment of the agricultural sector and the diversification of its activities, as well as the development of its economic and social environment. In this context, the multiplier effect that is characteristic of subsidies within the scope of rural development must be emphasised. Investments in the agricultural area and related areas stimulate business activities in other sectors, which in turn is manifested in regional value added and in job security.

Families with children are a major element of the future viability of a community. In order for families with children to enjoy living in a certain place, structures are necessary that have a positive impact on the family's immediate living space inasmuch as they take their special needs into account. Favourable framework conditions for families at the local level are therefore an important factor for the sustainable development of a region, as well as for the quality of a business location.

Participation in decision-making on the use of the resource space is a condition for social acceptance of the decisions made, and thus is also important in terms of democracy. Therefore, measures must be taken to enhance citizen awareness, to promote Agenda processes and propagate them from the bottom, and to develop and expand moderation and mediation processes to be employed in conflicts. Thereby, inter- and transdisciplinary research can make major contributions. Stronger implementation of the Local Agenda 21 is to be achieved by taking the allocation of funds in the course of transfers into account. The presentation of environmental impacts of infrastructures, use patterns and products (e.g. as “ecological footprint”, “ecological backpack”, “MIPS”) should serve to create awareness in investment and consumption decisions.

Key Objective 14 – Shaping Sustainable Mobility

Reducing mobility pressures and shaping a sustainable fulfilment of mobility needs

Background / Problem

Social and business contacts are maintained over ever-greater distances. The availability of people, goods and services is an important economic factor. With globalisation of business and transport relationships, and due to a lack of cost internalisation in the transport sector and the associated preference for road transport, the distances covered daily are increasing constantly. In the last years, this development has resulted in a constant increase in passenger and goods transport. In goods transport, this development has resulted in a drastic increase in mileage, since transport processes are a low cost factor. In passenger transport, greater distances are achieved instead of time gains, and the traffic burdens and commuter problems are exacerbated. The spatial separation of functions (housing, work, leisure) leads to mobility pressures that impair the people's regional bond and have an impact on social and economic structures. Population groups with limited access to motorised mobility, e.g. young people, elderly people, the disabled or people with low income, are particularly affected. In regions without adequate public transport, dependence on individual motorised transport is particularly high. The emissions and social follow-up costs of transport are one of the most important unsolved problems of sustainable development.

Objective

The key objective of the Sustainability Strategy is to allow fulfilment of the mobility needs of society in a sustainable manner. By implementing cost fairness in the transport sector and by spatial integration of housing, work and leisure, mobility pressures should be eliminated wherever possible and small-scale structures both in rural areas as well as mixed structures in conurbations should be promoted. This requires adjustments in space and regional planning, the internalisation of external costs, a mobility and transport management for optimal use of the existing infrastructure, and expansion and more attractiveness of environmentally friendly means of transport. In this context, special attention must be paid to the mobility needs of people with limited access to mobility. In order to enhance the acceptance and use of environmentally friendly means of transport, the increased application of so-called "soft measures" is necessary. Transport should not be offered as a mass good at giveaway prices, but rather be a highly qualified service that is socio-economically and ecologically optimised through integrative concepts and additional offers (e.g. logistic services, entertainment offers).

The aim is to decouple economic growth and traffic growth, and to achieve a shift from road transport to rail and ship transport, and to public passenger transport. Within the scope of the European sustainability strategy, Austria is committed to the development of a concrete action programme for the transport sector. Thereby, the focus of attention should also be on sustainable transport in sensitive regions, and on the EU candidates.

Starting Points

Both at the EU level (resolution by the Council of Transport Ministers) and within the scope of the OECD (EST Guidelines), comprehensive criteria, targets, strategy options and recommendations for sustainable transport have been developed, whereby Austria played a leading role. At the EU level, a sustainability strategy for the transport sector has already been developed, which could serve as a model for other sectors. Moreover, the developed strategy options and recommendations have already been implemented in a comprehensive OECD pilot study for the Alps countries, the countries of the Central European Initiative, and last but not least for Austria, with involvement of the relevant ministries, regional bodies, interest groups and NGOs. These pilot studies also include quantified scenarios up to the year 2030. Moreover, an assessment of the economic and social effects of these strategies was carried out within this scope. With the OECD guidelines for environmentally sustainable transport (EST Guidelines) adopted by the Environment Ministers of the OECD with significant participation and support by Austria in May 2001, a concrete operative action framework and process guidelines for the development and implementation of strategies in the transport sector are available. An important basis for implementation of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy has thus been created at the international level. In conjunction with the transport- and research-relevant agreements in the national climate protection strategy, the primary objective is now to implement and develop the agreements already negotiated.

In addition to the settlement of external costs in accordance with the polluter pays principle, important starting points thereby are to reduce the motorised transport needs by changing surface utilisation, mobility patterns, and production and consumer structures. Integrated transport, urban and regional planning (e.g. in zoning, in the location policy for businesses and in transport policy, etc.) is necessary. This requires for example that environmental and climate protection targets be anchored in the revised Austrian Regional Planning Concept (ÖRK 2001) and in the regional planning laws and plans of the provinces. Further uncontrolled urban spread into the cultivated landscapes in Austria must be stopped.

Moreover, mobility and transport management programmes with an impact on transport demand and the choice of means of transport must be promoted. Initiatives such as e.g. corporate mobility management in passenger transport and environmentally friendly goods transport logistics solutions should be promoted with support programmes. With a national platform (NEMO), the exchange of information and experience should be supported and examples of good practice should illustrate new solutions. NEMO will also ensure the international transfer of know-how as an interface to the European Platform for Mobility Management (EPOMM). The establishment of multi-functional regional information and advice centres (so-called "Mobility Centres") is of special importance in this context. Integrated mobility concepts such as they are currently being developed and implemented in tourism and

in professional transport can demonstrate solution models for sustainable mobility. Pilot projects for sustainable mobility are to be promoted.

Measures to enhance the awareness of a broad population are also necessary in order to increase the acceptance of environmentally friendly transport and to influence the choice of transport in favour of sustainable mobility. Thereby, information for consumers, for example mandatory labelling of new cars with regard to mileage-specific CO₂ emissions to support fleet consumption agreements, plays an important role.

Key Objective 15 – Optimising the Transport Systems

Promoting the most environmentally friendly, most resource-sparing, most energy efficient and safest forms of transport

Background / Problem

Solving the transport problem is a key factor in achieving a sustainable development. In order to achieve the goals of climate protection, a marked reduction in traffic emissions is necessary. Despite the optimisation of motor and drive technologies, CO₂ emissions due to traffic rose by 54% between 1980 and 1999 due to the increase in overall mileage. The socio- and health-political impacts of traffic resulting from road accidents and premature deaths due to traffic-related air pollution are enormous. In addition, traffic is the main cause of noise pollution, which affects about one quarter of the Austrian population directly.

Objective

The key objective of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy is to promote the most environmentally friendly, most resource-sparing, most energy-efficient and safest means of transport through innovation, technology and infrastructure. To achieve this, the development, testing and widespread application of alternative and energy-efficient drive concepts, logistics structures and transport technologies is to be promoted, the use of alternative fuels (e.g. biofuels) and drive systems is to be promoted with consideration for ecobalances, the interfaces between means of transport are to be optimised, pedestrian and cycle traffic are to be promoted, existing shipping routes are to be used better, and the attractiveness and use of rail and other local public transport is to be reinforced.

Starting Points

A sustainable transport system as defined at the EU and OECD level allows the fundamental need of individuals, companies and societies with regard to use and expansion to be covered safely and in a way that is in accordance with the protection of health and ecosystems, and which also promotes fairness for future generations. It is financially affordable and efficient, offers a choice between means of transport, and promotes a competitive economy and a balanced regional development. It limits emissions and waste to the level to which the Earth is able to absorb them, uses renewable resources only to the extent in which they are able to regenerate and non-renewable resources only to the extent in which renewable substitutes can be developed. Thereby, it reduces the impacts of space demand and noise pollution to a minimum. The long-term quality targets of a sustainable transport system are its contribution towards achieving the climate protection target, protection of air quality, substantial reduction of noise pollution, and land use with the aim of guaranteeing clean air and water and the protection of ecosystems, as well as maximum road safety.

In a sustainable transport system, the safety of all transport users is also to the fore. All other measures must be based on the criterion of safety for health and life. Transport safety comprises the constant improvement of safety standards on the one hand, and on the other hand the adjustment and surveillance of traffic rules plays a fundamental role in the realisation of a sustainable transport system. In this context, respect for the rights of transport users, especially the users of public transport must also be mentioned, since sustainable transport guarantees consumer protection through a high quality level.

Moreover, Austria should in a pro-active policy be committed to the technological improvement of conventional drive and exhaust treatment systems, as well as supporting the further development of threshold levels with regard to vehicle emissions and fuel specifications. The development, testing and broad application of alternative and energy-efficient vehicles and drive concepts (e.g. e-vehicles, fuel cell, biodiesel, bio-alcohol, hydrogen, hybrid concepts, etc.) should be promoted by pilot actions, especially in towns and ecologically sensitive areas. The use of biofuels should be expanded gradually and continuously to the greatest extent possible. The types of biofuels to be promoted must be selected based on their ecobalance. The emission standards should be more stringent and the quality of fuels improved, especially by further reducing the maximum content of petrol and diesel. Existing research and technology grants in the transport sector should be promoted and focussed particularly on sustainability-relevant objectives. Noise pollution should be reduced both on the emission side and on the imission side.

With the Austrian General Transport Plan (GVP-Ö), which defines the future development of the transport infrastructure, a planning basis has been created in which the commitment to mobility has been linked with the principle of sustainability – as an interaction between ecological, economic and social values. The main focus thereby is on rail transport infrastructure. In addition to expansion of the rail infrastructure, the Austrian General Transport Plan also defines measures for improving intermodal transport and intermodal transport logistics with the aim of shifting goods transports from road to rail. Furthermore, the construction of intermodal goods terminals, better integration of ports and airports with the rail and road network, and better use of combined transport (including rolling freight) are planned as important measures.

In conjunction with the Austrian General Transport Plan, the Transport Telematics Offensive 2002+ by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology aims at increasing the capacity of all means of transport, reducing congestion and travel times, optimising the interfaces between means of transport and thus shaping the transport flows more efficiently as a whole with the widespread use of transport telematics and integrated transport management. This will make a significant contribution towards improving road safety and reducing the traffic-related CO₂ emissions and other environmental burdens.

Especially along the Danube corridor, the waterways have a strategic importance for ecologically sustainable handling of the predicted traffic increases in goods transportation as a result of EU enlargement. In this context, “*via donau*” has been established with the mandate to promote transport on the Danube (especially combined transport), and to integrate shipping as an efficient means of transport in intermodal logistics and transport chains with a technology offensive.

With promotion programmes in the sector of combined transport and connecting railways, the attractiveness and importance of ecologically more sustainable means of transport such as rail and shipping are to be promoted even further in goods transport.

To achieve sustainable passenger transport, there is to be a marked shift to public transport by rail, bus, taxi and flexible systems, and to walking and cycling. This is to be achieved by more investments in the adaptation of roads, better traffic organisation, and by re-orientation in housing planning towards mixed use and short distances. The concepts for parking space management must be expanded further, rail investment funds and local transport financing must be guaranteed with better service incentives and more quality assurance. The creation of perfectly coordinated, customer-friendly bus and train services, supported by the use of new technologies (e.g. intermodal information systems, regional customer-optimised schedules, local transport service contracts between the provinces, regional municipal associations and transport companies) and the reduction of tax allowances for individual motorised traffic to enhance the attractiveness of local public passenger transport are also an important focus of attention.

Indicators

- Accumulation of pollutants in the topsoil or exceeding of thresholds¹
- Exceedance of deposition values (critical loads)¹
- Groundwater quality in accordance with Groundwater Threshold Ordinance and Water Framework Directive
- Surface water: good/very good ecological condition and good chemical condition in accordance with Water Framework Directive
- Greenhouse gas emissions (sectoral break down)¹
- Exceedance of air quality standards and targets (in accordance with the Act on Ambient Air Quality and the Forestry Act)
- Share of organic farms in entire agricultural and forest area, and share of farms participating in agricultural environmental programmes.
- Share of sealed surface
- Change in use of surfaces (regional break down)
- Red list of endangered species and biotopes²
- Land use²
- Mileage³
- Price development in the transport sector⁴
- External costs of transport⁵
- Traffic-related emissions¹
- Share of alternative fuels
- Energy efficiency of means of transport (fleet consumption)
- Access to mobility (availability of public transport)
- Number of traffic deaths and casualties

¹ The components to be collected remain to be defined.

² These indicators are representative of indicators that partly have to be developed or are not collected regularly yet and which allow monitoring of the key objective "Preserving the Diversity of Species and Landscapes".

³ In ton-kilometres (by road [light duty vehicles, heavy duty vehicles, semitrailers], rail, water, air); in vehicle-kilometres (by rail [railway, electric public transport], road [passenger cars, bus, moped, motorcycle, pedestrian and bicycle], air).

⁴ Shares of transport-relevant items in the consumer price index.

⁵ Including congestion times, environmental and health burden, accident follow-up costs

Austria's Responsibility

An active role in Europe and in the world

Sustainability is a concept that has been developed on the basis of a global stocktaking. It observes the relationships between production and consumption, between economic growth and the consumption of resources, between the life objectives and life realities of human beings. It is obvious that in a global age like ours these categories do not stop at the national borders. Our standard of living, our economic power and our environment will therefore only be sustainable if our neighbours near and far have the same objectives and there is an opportunity for sustainable development for everyone. Sustainable development is a major contribution towards the prevention of violent conflicts and refugee movement, towards reducing global poverty and the resulting economic migration. In troubled regions, political peace efforts and humanitarian aid frequently require military protection and support.

The international community and the members of the European Union are called upon to use the national opportunities to shape policies for sustainable development. In this Strategy, the federal government combines this objective with its desire to play an active role in European and global forums and decision-making processes. This applies to the level of the United Nations and to bodies in which the southern and eastern countries are represented as much as to the level of the European Union, which has anchored the objective of sustainable development as a constitutional principle for the Community in the Treaty of Amsterdam. The objectives of global sustainable development can be achieved only with international cooperation.

At the European level Austria has – especially since its accession to the European Union in 1995 – undertaken and supported initiatives for a sustainability policy, and since then it has been committed to the development of suitable framework conditions. Austria emphasises that better coordination of policies at the national and at EU level is of special importance in the pursuit of sustainability goals. Moreover, Austria sees itself as a leader in the enlargement of the European Union and in its orientation towards the goals of sustainable development. Therefore, Austria is also committed to shaping the position of the Union as a driving power in global environmental issues both actively and intensively. Especially issues of transport, energy and agricultural policy are central challenges that concern every European state. Thereby, the underlying principle of cost equity and a shift in tax burdens from labour to the consumption of resources deserves special attention. In this and all other sectors, Austria is endeavouring to find starting points that will help to bring about a reversal of unsustainable trends, and to participate actively in shaping policies at the EU level.

Austria's activities at the international level concentrate on an active participation in the international bodies that create the instruments for implementing the aspects of sustainability.

This work in international forums is particularly important in the environmental sector, and is therefore a major component of Austrian foreign policy. Austria has signed numerous international environmental treaties, and has been actively involved in their preparation and further development.

Austria's efforts for development cooperation focus on the objectives of fighting poverty, securing peace, and protecting and preserving the environment. This development policy is an integral part of international relations oriented towards security and stability. There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development. At the same time, the poor in this world are harder hit by environmental degradation than the rich. Therefore, the discourse on environmental aspects is included in all areas of development cooperation. The objective of Austrian development cooperation is to promote sustainable development in the developing countries, with positive effects both in the south and in the north. To achieve sustainable alleviation of poverty and global inequality of opportunities, specific measures that will benefit the poorer population groups directly are necessary. At the international level, it has been realised that development cannot be prescribed from outside. It is the governments and people in the developing countries themselves that must take the decisions with regard to speed and form of the development process wherever possible. Sustainable development can only be effective where the people concerned take the initiative themselves. Thereby, integration of women in the decision-making process at all levels is particularly important. Development cooperation must be seen in a constantly changing global context. Constructive cooperation of all actors at the bilateral and multilateral level is necessary in order to be successful. Austria supports the common objectives for a long-lasting economic, ecological and social development as adopted by the OECD Development Assistance Committee and in the UN Millennium Declaration.

Key Objective 16 – Fighting Poverty, Creating a Social and Economic Equilibrium Within and Between the Countries

Making a contribution towards the consolidation of security, peace and human rights

Background / Problem

Without internal and international peace and human security, every social, economic and ecological development is threatened. Peace means not only being free of violent conflicts, but also exclusion of the permanent threat of poverty (e.g. due to lack of nutrition and water, lack of education and training, lack of housing, lack of health care, and lacking or no access to participation in political decision-making). In the last 10 years, more than 100 violent conflicts within and between countries have been settled with arms. Today, more than 1.2 billion people worldwide live in extreme poverty, and more than 800 million of them suffer from chronic malnutrition. In many parts of the world, high population growth makes the fight against poverty difficult, since neither the education system nor the labour market can expand fast enough to keep up with the demographic developments. Bilateral conflicts, civil wars and terrorist attacks in many regions of the world constantly remind us that poverty and hopelessness are breeding grounds for the violent settlement of conflicts. Stable political framework conditions are promoted by respect for human rights, rule of law, the establishment of democratic structures in political decision-making processes, and by responsible government. Moreover, they are supported by the consolidation of structures and institutions at all political and administrative levels, by sustainable use of global public goods, and by access to natural, economic and social resources.

Objective

The key objective for sustainable development is to fight poverty and create a social, economic and political balance within and between countries. Austria will participate in the implementation of international development goals (United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000) at the bilateral and multilateral level (regional and global), show commitment for the promotion of human rights, and strengthen the basis for human security and peace with supportive measures in the partner countries. By the year 2015, the number of people living in extreme poverty is to be reduced by half.

Starting Points

Eradicating poverty is a major objective of sustainable development and cannot be regarded in isolation from socio-economic and political processes. Sustainable development as a necessary precondition for successful reduction of poverty is an extremely complex process that is determined by a great number of interacting factors.

In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the international community of states set itself clear and ambitious development goals that are to be realised by the year 2015: Reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty by half, reducing the number of people suffering from hunger by half, reducing the number of people with no access to clean water by half. The trigger for this Declaration was “Copenhagen + 5”, a special session of the UN aimed at reviewing progress and discussing further strategies for the solution of social problems five years after the Social Summit (1995). Reports by the participating states indicated inter alia that the living conditions of extremely poor people had worsened. When we speak of extreme poverty, we mean people who have to live on less than one US dollar per day. Since 1990, the number of people living in such extreme poverty has decreased from 1.3 to 1.2 billion according to the UN, but not all the regions of the world were able to benefit from this positive development and in some regions the situation has actually become worse. If the current political, social and demographic trends persist, there is a risk that without appropriate efforts by the international community all the economic and social achievements of the past will be endangered or even reversed. The challenge of fighting poverty has long been an issue, but never before has the international community – both non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and national and multi-lateral bodies and institutions – dealt with this issue with such solidarity. Austria as one of the most prosperous countries in the world and a member of the international community has committed itself to making special efforts in the fight against poverty in the future, and to increasing its financial support for development cooperation.

Austria is committed to a policy of peace. The peaceful resolution of social and political problems is Austria’s prime objective at the international level. For peace is the fundamental condition for economic and social development. The motto “prevention is better and less expensive than treatment” also applies to the handling of (potential) conflicts and crises. Therefore, Austria’s efforts are aimed at preventing violent conflicts from arising in the first place. International diplomacy often comes too late and does not become active until the conflict situation has turned into a violent crisis or war and has cost human lives. Nonetheless, active participation in measures to prevent conflicts and in crisis management to promote, secure and restore peace and stability is an important component of security policy for Austria.

Development cooperation is based on conflict prevention: Within the scope of concrete projects as well as political dialogue, respect for human rights, democratisation and participation of the civil society in political and social processes are to be promoted, thus contributing towards a timely, peaceful resolution of political and social conflict potentials. Programmes and projects, as well as other bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation will be tested for their compatibility with the criteria of human rights and democracy. Democratic processes at all levels should be stimulated more strongly by Austrian development cooperation. In particular Africa, the continent that suffers most from armed conflicts, should be supported in developing its conflict resolution potential by training programmes as well as

by strengthening African institutions. Apart from regional organisations, NGOs are playing an increasingly important role in this context.

Key Objective 17 – A Globally Sustainable Economy

Developing a world economy that guarantees an intact environment and social equity

Background / Problem

Both industrialised nations and developing countries face the challenge of developing and implementing socially and ecologically sustainable forms of economy. In the developing countries, the lack of capital and human resources complicates this process. The current one-sided orientation towards the production of raw materials, and the present division of labour on the world market result in a one-sided orientation of the economy of these countries, and prevent global economic growth from translating into development and the reduction of poverty. The transfer of technology, know-how and financial support in the expansion of production capacities, as well as fair conditions on the world market are necessary. Austria will continue to support the goals of the “Millennium Declaration” at the international level. Within Austria, coherence between the various policy areas should be improved.

Objective

In the developing countries, the key objective of developing socially and ecologically compatible economic processes means promoting independent production chains using local raw materials and labour, based on technology transfer, financial support and fair access to the world market. Within the scope of international division of labour, this will lead to more value added in the developing countries. These sustainable forms of production are to be achieved with a strategy of positive incentives, with the promotion of efficiency in production, with specific support for the partner countries, and with further approaches within the scope of the WTO negotiations. The relevant negotiations within the scope of the WTO must be designed with special consideration for the share of developing countries on the world market, and with special consideration for fundamental social and ecological issues. This goes hand in hand with the objective of increasing the share of socially and ecologically sustainable production in the world output and in world trade as quickly as possible.

Starting Points

If the fight against poverty consisted only in unilateral, free provision of essential goods such as food, medication, drinking water, etc. to people living in extreme poverty, it could be limited to the definition and identification of poverty and to direct assistance. However, such transfers would do no more than to treat the symptoms, and would result in dependence on outside assistance and thus exacerbate the underdevelopment. The aim of a sustainable fight against poverty must be to ensure that the poor will be able to help themselves to overcome their economic distress of their own accord and permanently, and that they will at least be

able to realise an income that guarantees that they will be able to provide themselves with the most essential goods through their own efforts. In many regions, the human and material resources most necessary for the development of an economic and social infrastructure are lacking. For the least developed countries, sustainable economic growth can most probably only be realised with technical and financial assistance from outside, and this is likely to remain so for a long time.

The aim of Austrian development policy is to promote agricultural, manual and industrial production. Economic diversification in the form of a stronger informal sector, small industry, the development and promotion of new export-oriented activities, and promotion of the private sector are to contribute towards this. Moreover, access to the markets in the north for the products of the developing countries is to be facilitated by technical cooperation in the field of quality management. To achieve this, it is imperative to establish an open, multilateral trading system that takes the fragile structure of industry and agriculture in the developing countries into account and pursues a holistic development approach.

Socially compatible structural reorganisation programmes should create favourable macro-economic conditions while at the same time taking ecological aspects into account. Further measures are increased debt relief – in terms of both bilateral and multilateral debt. The reduction of subsidies for agricultural exports of industrialised countries and other support measures could assure a more just international competition, and promote the economic consolidation of the developing countries significantly. In order to shape the Austrian economic, trade and foreign policy coherently, the EU and other international organisations and their multilateral channels must be exploited and coordinated with each other.

Key Objective 18 – Our World as a Living Space

Securing natural and social living spaces for everyone in the long term

Background / Problem

Regardless of worldwide efforts since the UN Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, the economic and social development processes often still take place at the expense of the natural and social basis of life. The developing countries are most strongly affected by this. In these countries, soil, water and vegetation come under enormous pressure from efforts to achieve economic development and to secure the existence of large parts of the population. In the 15 years between 1980 and 1995 alone, for example, some 200 million hectares of forest were lost in the developing countries (FAO 1999). The results are increasing degradation of natural resources and the long-term loss of living space. This increases these countries' susceptibility for disasters such as droughts or floods – whether natural or man-made – and at the same time decreases their capacity to cope with such disasters. Ultimately, however, the whole world is affected by the negative consequences. The tropical rain forests, in particular, are of central global importance for the stability of the climate, for water resources, and as a virtually inexhaustible source of biological diversity. The reasons for the destructive processes are manifold and can be found at various levels. Macro-economic conditions – the value of “ecological services” is hardly respected – make a significant contribution to this situation, as do lacking national legislation and inadequate control, as well as difficult land tenure situations.

Objective

The key objective of international cooperation is to promote a balanced equilibrium between the economic, social and ecological dimension of development processes in the countries of the south and the east. The global environmental goods soil, water and atmosphere must be protected in the long term, and the empirically established knowledge necessary for the protection and sustainable development of these global environmental goods must be established. Negative consequences must be avoided, or at least warded off effectively. Austria will support the development and implementation of national sustainability strategies in the developing countries. The programmes of Austrian development cooperation and assistance programmes for Central and Eastern European States and the Newly Independent States will take the environmental and socio-ecological aspects into account as effectively as possible. Their quality should improve continuously. The share of funds within the scope of bilateral programme and project assistance available for environmental protection will be stabilised at about 30%.

Starting Points

Environment and development are inseparably linked. The social, ecological and economic development is a uniform and interdependent process. This message from the Declaration of Rio (1992), Agenda 21, and the four global conventions on climate, ozone layer, biological diversity and desertification, demonstrates the mutual responsibility of industrialised nations and developing countries to promote sustainable development. It also contains the clear obligation of all countries to implementation within the individual scope of a development and environmental partnership. Austria has been actively involved in all the above agreements, and has thus committed itself to continue to preserve and promote natural living space and to take every step necessary in order to achieve this goal. The steps towards achieving this goal are manifest at various levels. These include active participation in international bodies, conceptual contributions to global conventions and environmental programmes, as well as their implementation.

At the strategic and operative level of bilateral cooperation with the countries of the south and east, environmental issues are taken into account systematically. An important instrument for ensuring that environmental protection is considered in development and assistance programmes for Central and Eastern European States and the Newly Independent States is the environmental impact assessment. Since 1996, all the projects of Austrian Development Cooperation at the Foreign Ministry (ÖEZA) are subjected to such an assessment. This is an expression of the conviction that virtually every measure has direct or indirect positive or negative effects on the natural resource base. Thereby, the preservation and promotion of a natural environment must not be assessed one-dimensionally from the purely ecological perspective. Social and economic factors always have to be considered as well. Partnership with the local population is particularly important. Lacking know-how or lacking access to technologies is rarely the only reasons for economic and ecological problems. Frequently, measures are not in conformity with the life strategies of the people concerned, and there is often a lack of necessary institutional capacities and sufficient scope of action for an effective use of know-how and technology. Functioning, secure and self-responsible local communities are therefore the best guarantee for a sparing use of resources. Therefore, the local communities must be supported and promoted accordingly.

At the private sector level, Austria must also show a stronger commitment. Austria has internationally recognised expertise in the field of “environmental technology and environmental management”. In the interest of an efficient north-south cooperation, Austria must show more commitment for technology and know-how transfer in the environmental field. Moreover, due to the high standard of its environmental technology products, Austria endeavours to export these not only to Europe but also worldwide, in order to contribute to an appropriate improvement of the individual environmental situation. Thus, Austria can not only

make a significant contribution towards global sustainable development, but also create additional jobs. After financial assessment by the Austrian Control Bank, the granting of federal sureties for Austrian goods and services by the Republic of Austria is also subject to an environmental impact assessment. Since February 2002, this assessment has been standardised within the OECD framework. The use of project-related Kyoto mechanisms (joint implementation and clean development mechanism) as planned in the Austrian climate strategy offers additional support for Austria's contribution towards sustainable development in the world.

Key Objective 19 – International Cooperation and Financing

Making sustainable development affordable for partner countries

Background / Problem

Global sustainability also means an increased demand for funds. While countries with a high or medium income can use their own resources and achieve high growth rates through globalisation, the least developed countries have to operate with extreme financial restraints. Due to repayment of debts and debt interest, and extremely low-productive investments, they do not have enough foreign investment capital to implement measures comprehensively and on time. In addition, the international decrease in ODA (official development assistance) sends out negative signals with regard to solidarity and support for developing countries in globally important areas of the sustainability strategy, and this trend must be reversed.

Objective

The key objective of financing for sustainable development in developing countries is based on precisely these very complex situations. Therefore, Austria sees a very promising approach in a mix of measures: With support for developing countries in the development of political and social stability, the appropriate conditions for foreign investments can be created. Measures of debt relief as well as investment in the economic power of the partner countries are necessary (e.g. with the development of innovative national and international funding methods, deficit guarantees, promotion of public private partnerships). Only by increasing the official development assistance can the international goals defined in the Strategy and the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the heads of state and government on September 18, 2000, be achieved on schedule (2015). Austria is committed to an efficient deployment of official development assistance, and has declared to the European Commission that it will increase its ODA to 0.35% of GDP in 2003. This will be implemented especially through debt relief measures planned by Austria within the scope of the HIPC initiative. Moreover, Austria will fulfil its obligations with regard to preparations for the Financing for Development Conference as declared at the European Council in Barcelona. Accordingly, Austria will also do everything to achieve a volume of at least 0.33% of GDP for public development cooperation by 2006, and thus contribute towards a collective increase in development cooperation on the part of the EU member states to 0.39% of GDP by the year 2006. In the medium term, Austria aims to achieve the internationally agreed level of 0.7% of GDP.

Starting Points

As noted by the United Nations in a report on the question of development funding in early 2002, the annual ODA payments must at least be doubled (currently about 50 billion dollars) if the development goals adopted by the international community of states are to be

implemented. Thus, the issue of increasing development assistance is once more to the fore in international considerations.

The current expenditures for development assistance by the industrialised nations are still far behind their ambitious development goals, however. Within the EU, the average expenditures for development cooperation merely amount to 0.35% of gross domestic product. Austria's public development assistance expenditures for the year 2000 amounted to 0.23% of gross domestic public, which is close to the OECD average. At the European Council in Gothenburg in June 2001, Austria and the other member states of the European Union declared that they planned to "reach the UN target for official development assistance of 0.7% of GDP as soon as possible, and to achieve concrete progress towards reaching this target before the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002." Austria has declared to the European Commission that it will raise its ODA to 0.35% of GDP in 2003. Moreover, Austria – like all other EU member states – promised a level of at least 0.33% of GDP as of 2006 at the European Council in Barcelona.

At an informal meeting in October 2001, the EU development ministers agreed that the events of September 11, 2001 had to be regarded as additional proof that increased funds for development cooperation would be necessary. The increasing global imbalances (and the resulting injustices) could not be eliminated by globalisation alone. Development policy in the broadest sense was viewed as a positive supplement to globalisation policy, and as a contribution to global security.

Key Objective 20 – Sustainability Union Europe

Turning the new Europe into a Sustainability Union

Background / Problem

Sustainability is anchored in the primary law of the EU (Articles 2 and 6 EC), and is therefore a fundamental principle of community action. On the occasion of the European Council in Gothenburg in June 2001, the EU Sustainability Strategy was adopted in order to operationalise this provision. Austria was actively involved in this process and is now committed to its implementation. Europe must continue to be exemplary – on the one hand with the implementation of sustainability within the Union, and on the other hand with its policy in international and global forums. The European role as a leader in the field of international environmental treaties (Climate Convention, Convention on the Preservation of Biodiversity, Aarhus Convention, UN Forest Forum and many others) is the model for positioning the EU in the socio-economic dimension of sustainable development. Due to its 1300 km border with future member states, Austria is the EU member state that will be most affected by the forthcoming enlargement and its economic, ecological and social opportunities and risks. Austria welcomes the resolution by the heads of state and government to accept a number of new members prior to the elections for the European Parliament in 2004. Many of the future member states show positive developments in major areas of sustainability – from public transport to the protection of life fundamentals and biodiversity. These processes should be reinforced by accession to the EU, whereby the necessary implementation of the *acquis* forms a basis for further activities.

Objective

Within the framework of the EU, Austria is in favour of fully integrating the future member states in the implementation and further development of the EU Sustainability Strategy now. The traditionally close bilateral ties between Austria and the neighbouring Central and Eastern European states are the foundation for actively supporting the political vision of a “Sustainability Union Europe” at the project level and in regional cooperation in the field of sector policies, whereby the ecological dimension is currently particularly important due to the large number of legal acts. Austria also sees itself as the motor of EU sustainability policy. Austria has become firmly established in the EU framework programmes for research and technological development in the field of sustainability research with a large number of projects, and it would like to consolidate this position. Austria also supports the consistent implementation of Art. 6 EC, which provides for the integration of environmental protection needs in other policy areas in order to promote sustainable development. Austria has ambitious views, whether in the preparation of sustainability indicators or in institutional arrangements to guarantee sustainability. Thus, Europe is to become the part of the world with the highest resource efficiency in the economy and the highest quality of life for its

citizens: By the year 2015, the aim is to increase resource productivity by a factor of 4. The risks to present and future generations associated with nuclear energy are not compatible with the vision of a sustainable Europe. Nuclear energy is not a sustainable form of energy production and should be replaced by other – especially renewable – forms of energy in the future. A major Austrian issue is the development of common European safety standards for nuclear power plants as the first step in the right direction. The long-term goal remains the pan-European renunciation of nuclear power. Austria considers the promoted use of renewable energy sources to be a core issue of a sustainable energy policy, and supports this at the European level and in the future member states.

Starting Points

A central starting point is Austria's active participation within the scope of the ongoing processes and strategies for sustainable development at the EU level (esp. Lisbon Strategy, EU Sustainability Strategy and Cardiff Process). The objective of better integration of EU economic, social and employment policies, which was originally defined for the Lisbon Strategy (adopted in March 2000), was supplemented by the dimension of environmental policy with the adoption of the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development in June 2001. The Lisbon Process is now to form the core process for implementation of sustainable development at the EU level. The spring meetings of the heads of state and government will become the central crystallisation point for this process. Austria will do everything to achieve a rapid and consistent implementation of the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development, and for treatment and discussion of the priority issues climate protection, transport, energy, natural resources and public health within the scope of future spring meetings of the European Council. Austria will pursue the targets for sustainable development defined in this Strategy in a coherent and coordinated manner both throughout the EU and globally. Moreover, coordination between the individual member states – especially with regard to the individual national sustainability strategies – is an important issue for Austria. In the medium term, the further development of this Strategy should pay attention in particular to comparability and coherence with the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development. The structural indicators used for the Lisbon Process and for the preparation of the so-called synthesis reports by the European Commission for monitoring progress in the Lisbon Process, as well as on achievement of sustainable development, must also be developed further. Thereby, attention must be paid to a balanced consideration and presentation of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The further development of individual strategies for environmental integration within the scope of the Cardiff Process is an important focus for Austria at the EU level.

In the shaping of a sustainable EU transport policy, Austria will support the development and implementation of concrete sustainability targets and action programmes for the mobility and transport sector. Thereby, the focus of attention should be on sustainable transport in

sensitive regions and on EU enlargement. A central demand is that economic growth and further growth of traffic be decoupled. Based on this fact, extensive thought must be given to how a sustainable strategy can effect a trend reversal as quickly as possible in problem areas like emissions, increase in traffic, noise emissions and distribution of traffic between the individual means of transport. Here, too, the focus of implementation must be on internalisation of the external environmental and social costs of transport. The complexity of the problem requires a comprehensive approach through the establishment of suitable framework conditions on the one hand, and local- and region-specific initiatives on the other hand, comprising awareness building just as much as the long-term re-orientation of regional planning and infrastructure development. At the international level, the implementation of treaties, guidelines and pilot projects for sustainable transport (e.g. UNECE Vienna Declaration on Transport and Environment, WHO Charter on Transport, Environment and Health, OECD EST Guidelines, CEI Declaration on Sustainable Transport, UNEP Project EST goes EAST) must be supported and promoted actively. At the bilateral level, the development and implementation of regional sustainability strategies for transport (e.g. Alpine region, EU candidates) should be supported and promoted.

In the field of agriculture, too, the public needs articulated more and more strongly in recent years, such as health, food safety and quality, animal protection, and the protection of nature and landscape, must also be taken into account more strongly. First steps in this direction were already taken with the reforms of AGENDA 2000. The intensification and initiation of new developments in the field of sustainable development of Community agricultural policy have already been started. In this context, an intensified political discussion of sustainability in all three dimensions and the further development of the second pillar of GAP established with AGENDA 2000, and the development of rural regions, which still does not have the significance at the European level that it should have in Austria's view, are also important. More attention must be paid to networking and interdependence in the interest of sustainable development.

In the field of climate change and environmentally friendly energy, Austria takes the stand that the creation of favourable framework conditions for the use of renewable forms of energy must be promoted and an increased efficiency of energy consumption must be pursued. Thereby, Austria expressly emphasises that nuclear energy cannot be regarded as a sustainable solution for covering the energy demand. Many of the problems associated with this form of power generation, especially issues of safety and waste management, are still unresolved. In order to pursue a renunciation of nuclear power at the EU level, an amendment to the Euratom Agreement is necessary in Austria's view. The next institutional opportunity for such an amendment will be at the government conference in 2004. Austria will support a revision of this treaty, which has remained more or less unchanged since it came into force in 1959. Moreover, Austria will take initiatives to create uniform and high safety standards for all

nuclear power plants still in operation. At the European Council in Laeken in December 2001, Austria was able to score a first success when the European Council agreed that a high degree of nuclear safety would continue to be guaranteed in the Union and clearly emphasised that the security and safety of nuclear power plants would continue to have to be monitored.

Another important starting point is Austria's role in the negotiation of conventions and protocols in the European context. The treaty on protection of the Alps, the Alpine Convention, as a model for a regional sustainability instrument should be mentioned here as one example of Austria's active commitment and role in negotiations. The implementation and pursuit of the issues of this Convention – in collaboration with the actors at the EU level – are a central issue for Austria. The aim is to achieve recognition of the Alpine Convention as a permanent instrument with the long-term perspective of preserving the living, economic and recreational area "Alps".

Austria regards stronger cooperation with the EU candidates as an important starting point for achieving the goal of shaping the new Europe as a sustainability union. Thereby, Austria is setting numerous impulses mainly in the field of bilateral cooperation, for example in twinning projects.

Indicators

The objectives are defined for the international level; therefore they can be measured with a national indicator only to a limited extent.

With regard to Austria's commitment at the international level, however, a need for action results from the progress made in the field of global sustainable development. Important indicators for this at the international level are

- the Human Development Index (HDI)
- the Human Poverty Index (HPI)
- the Gender Development Index (GDI)
- the Corruption Index

At national level, the following indicators can be named:

- Official development assistance (ODA) in % of GDP
- Expenditures for the relevant focus themes of Austrian Development Cooperation according to EZA Statistics¹
- Environmental projects within the scope of public export funding
- Share of environmental technology exports in total exports

¹

Fight against poverty, equality of men and women in development cooperation, participatory development & good governance – "promotion of democracy", basic social services, environment

Implementation

Sustainable development is a task that goes beyond any governmental term of office. This Strategy is the beginning of a continuous process. It is not a theoretical concept, but should trigger and coordinate a multitude of concrete steps. The preceding sections have described the key objectives and defined the indicators for measuring the achievement of these targets. The “First Steps” listed in the Annex are examples of the necessary, broadly based, inter-ministerial and coordinated implementation process. The key objectives will be operationalised in a continuous process through short-, medium- and long-term targets, and implemented with concrete measures. Existing policies, plans and programmes will be evaluated with regard to their compatibility with these concepts and objectives, and then developed accordingly. The process described in the following section should ensure that

- the Strategy is implemented
- the targets are achieved within the defined period
- the processes and instruments of implementation are defined
- the responsibilities are clear
- participation, self-organisation and commitment are promoted
- the public is sensitised and kept informed
- mechanisms for coordination with existing strategies are established
- strategic networks with the regional and local level are set up
- the status of implementation is assessed by continuous monitoring
- further development of the strategy is made possible through regular evaluation and reflection.

Future ecological, economic and social challenges for Austria should be overcome and unsustainable trends stopped through consistent implementation. Integrated solutions must be identified consistently and win-win situations exploited. As with all structural changes, there will not only be winners in the transition to sustainable development. Therefore, this transition must be shaped with consideration for the social and economic compatibility. Any target conflicts that might occur must be identified and resolved, whereby the state will be responsible for moderation of this process. Through long-term, continuous and reliable lines of development with appropriate time frames for adjustment, the planning security for business, private individuals and municipalities is guaranteed. With a transparent, reliable and long-term sustainability policy, the target groups can adjust to the structural change and exploit the new opportunities offensively. A social transfer and supportive measures should offset specific burdens for certain industries or social groups.

Special attention will have to be paid to those implementation steps that trigger continuous developments. Thus, acceptance of the necessary change will also be increased. The social capacity to learn will be enhanced by the careful design of feedback loops and participation of the people concerned. Therefore, the entire implementation process is based on the following five principles:

- **Systematic and efficient implementation** through sector and regional strategies
- **Coordination through cooperation** to assure the consistency and coherence of policies
- **Transparency** through regular monitoring on the basis of suitable indicators
- **Participation opportunities and broad-based public relations work**
- **Further development** through evaluation and a “learning strategy”

Systematic and Efficient Implementation

Developing concrete measures through sector and regional strategies

The federal government has raised the implementation of this Strategy and thus the sustainable development of Austria to an issue of top priority. However, the success of implementation is the joint responsibility of everyone concerned and of all the relevant actors, who are called upon to orient their action towards the concept of sustainable development and the key objectives of this Strategy. This requires new forms of cooperation between decision-makers, as well as self-responsible and decentralised action and the commitment of all social groups. Therefore, all the decision-making levels and actors (federal, provinces, municipalities – federal government, provincial governments, Parliament, interest groups – stakeholders, such as NGOs, socio-political actors, etc.) must be involved in the implementation. Existing networks and dialogue forums such as the round table “Sustainable Austria”, the national expert conference of “Sustainability Coordinators” set up by the Environmental Advisors of the Federal Provinces, the dialogue forum “Eco-social Market Economy”, the “Austrian Business Council for Sustainable Development”, the “Eco-Efficiency Round Table” and other platforms must be integrated in a suitable manner.

It is the responsibility of the individual regional bodies and institutions to define a clear number of concrete sub-targets that are coordinated and quantifiable wherever possible, time schedules and suitable instruments as well as measures of target achievement for the implementation. By establishing independent sector, regional, communal and local sustainability policies, the demand for political integration and consistency of political action should be met and decentralised implementation of the Strategy assured. Decentralised commitment (bottom-up) should thus be linked with superordinate coordination (top-down). The regional and local levels should be further strengthened as the central level for implementation. The municipalities at the local level and the districts and networks at the regional level (e.g. LEADER regions, municipal associations) are particularly called upon as dialogue partners for the federal level.

This strategy provides the framework for existing and future activities (strategies of the provinces for sustainable development at the regional level, action programmes, etc.), and serves to coordinate these and their further development. Existing policies, plans and programmes will be evaluated with regard to their compatibility with the concepts and key objectives of this strategy.

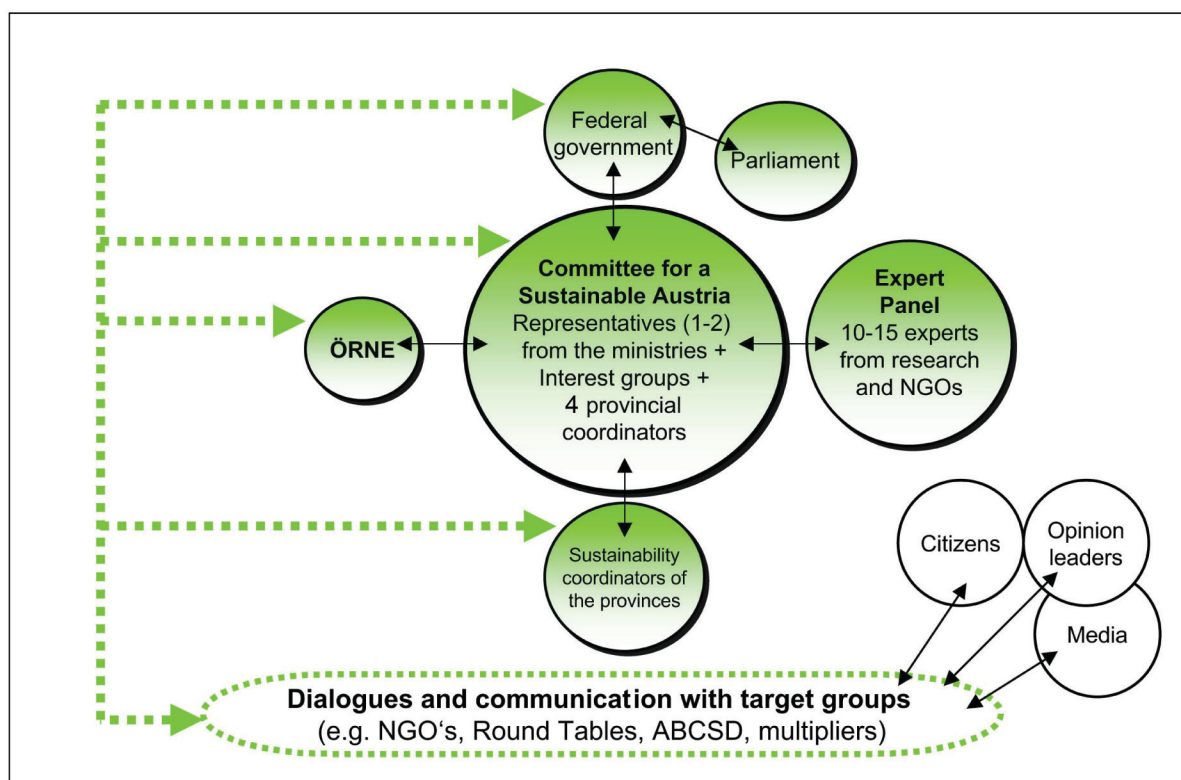
The key objectives of sustainable development are to become a core element of all policies. This requires the development of suitable instruments and processes (e.g. sustainability impact assessment of policies, programmes and plans). The key objectives of sustainable development should be integrated right at the start of political design and decision-making

processes, in order to reach coherent decisions – based on the clear and coordinated key objectives defined in this Strategy – in the future.

Coordination Through Cooperation

Assuring the consistency and coherence of policies

The various policies should reinforce each other mutually. This requires that horizontal and vertical coordination between the policies be improved, and that interfaces between the federal and provincial levels be established in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. Within the scope of domestic Austrian coordination, consistency between the targets pursued at the EU level and those pursued at the national, regional and local level must be assured. This requires stronger networking of ministries, provinces and social partners. Everyone involved can only work together without prejudice through cooperation and communication between the functionally structured areas. Continuous exchange of information on the status of implementation, regular coordination of the next implementation steps and continuous monitoring of implementation should ensure that the activities of all the participants are coordinated. This should be based upon existing coordination and dialogue structures wherever possible.



- The federal ministries and interest groups will nominate one to two people each as members of the “**Committee for a Sustainable Austria**” set up by the federal government. The provinces are invited to delegate four representatives from the Expert Conference of Sustainability Coordinators to this body. This high-ranking group will be

constituted in May 2002 and will accompany and coordinate the implementation of the Strategy.

- To support the implementation process and advise the Committee, an **Expert Panel** will be set up. The members of this panel will be nominated at the proposal of the Committee and by the umbrella organisations of the NGOs in the environmental and social field.
- Regular exchange of information between the Committee and the “**Austrian Council for Sustainable Development**” (ÖRNE), which is responsible for domestic coordination with regard to international activities for sustainable development (the processes within the framework of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development) will be assured.
- The **federal government** will be informed about the status of implementation annually in a progress report by the chairman of the Committee.
- The federal government will keep **Parliament** informed about the progress. Parliament will be asked to participate actively in the implementation of the Strategy.

Transparency

Measuring progress through regular monitoring on the basis of suitable indicators

Sustainable development cannot be realised as a process that takes place behind closed doors. There must be transparency and publicity with regard to progress in the implementation of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy. The following coordination, monitoring and reporting process is planned:

- **Work programmes:** The members of the Committee will analyse the Austrian Sustainability Strategy with regard to the relevant ministry-specific and institutional competencies, and define concrete working programmes within the scope of the individual functions and scope of action. These working programmes will contain projects and measures with a clear reference to the key objectives of the Sustainability Strategy and with a concrete schedule. Based on these individual programmes, the Committee will prepare a consolidated annual work programme that has been checked for internal consistency and completeness, and which is oriented towards the key objectives of this Strategy and coordinated with the EU Sustainability Strategy and the activities in the scope of the provinces. External quality assurance of the annual working programme will be provided by the members of the Expert Panel in the form of feedback on the working programmes of each institution. The first annual working programme is to be presented by January 2003.
- **Progress reports:** The Committee will prepare annual progress reports on the implemented activities, which will be oriented towards the structure and central issues of the working programmes. These reports will also present the effects achieved by the implementation activities based upon the indicators presented in this Strategy. With a structured comparison of working programmes and progress reports, feedback on the successes and possible impediments to implementation will be obtained. Process-accompanying evaluation will be provided in statements by the Expert Panel. The first progress report is to be presented to the federal government in January 2004.
- **Indicators:** The indicators contained in the section on the key objectives of the Strategy serve to monitor the achievement of targets. Wherever possible, quantitative values were selected for the issues formulated in the key objectives and indicators, for which the database is already secured and which allow an international comparison. This facilitates coordination with international reporting and does not cause additional effort or costs for the administration and enterprises. This set of indicators is not yet adequate for an overall assessment of sustainable development. It will also be necessary to establish indicators that support the analysis of causes. Reconciliation with this demand to describe the system-determinant values of sustainable development using indicators is only possible with a systematic approach. Thereby, not only the scientific-technically based

measurement values but also the aspects of people's perception and sensation must be taken into consideration, since sustainable development must be oriented towards their needs. The development of sustainable indicator systems for sustainable development within the EU must also be taken into account, and at the regional level indicators with a clear regional reference must be established. In the further development, special attention must be paid to the actual power of expression and the efficiency of data collection for the selected indicators.

- **Communication:** The effects of measures taken to implement the Sustainability Strategy on an integrated policy must be presented to the public. A transparent number of plausible indicators with a solid database (key or headline indicators) must also be developed for these communication processes.
- **Evaluation / further development:** In autumn 2005, an external evaluation of the implementation activities carried out so far and the results achieved in relation to the key objectives and standards of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy will be conducted by an interdisciplinary group of independent scientists. The evaluation report will be presented to the federal government in condensed form, and published. This evaluation thus forms the basis for further development and modifications to the present Austrian Sustainability Strategy, its key objectives and its implementation mechanisms.

Participation, Information and Communication

Making the people concerned participants in the implementation and further development

Sustainable development is only possible with mutual commitment. Therefore, the Austrian Sustainability Strategy appeals to all citizens, institutions and social groups (e.g. media, multipliers, entrepreneurs), and wants to motivate them all to participate actively in the project “Sustainable Austria”. In order to establish an involvement in the implementation of the Strategy that is characterised by participation and self-responsibility, decentralised structures where possible and free access to information for all population groups must be guaranteed, institutional support for participative decision-making must be assured, and appropriate coordination and dialogue structures must be created. Thereby, the federal government will initiate and hold dialogues with various social groups (e.g. business actors, actors from the scientific community and the cultural sector, youths, etc.), in order to allow these target groups to comment on the implementation of the Strategy and to make suggestions for concrete measures.

Participation means exploiting the knowledge of everyone involved and concerned for sustainable development. This requires the existence of participation and self-organisation processes that allow and promote the comprehensive integration of all social groups and classes. With better information and active involvement, the interest in participation in political processes can be enhanced, planning and decision-making processes can be made more transparent, and new participation opportunities can be created. Differentiated participation opportunities must be created at all levels and for various social groups.

- To support **participation in political planning and decision-making processes**, both the traditional forms for democratic action and participation must be effected with credibility, and innovative, long-term oriented instruments must be used and developed (e.g. consensus conferences, future workshops, scenario technique). They make it possible to develop concepts for certain themes in a process of consensus and broad participation. The model of social partnership has proved its worth in Austria. It will be necessary to investigate whether other interest groups (non-governmental organisations) can be involved more strongly in these processes.
- Planning and decision-making processes at the **regional and local level** have a direct impact on the living spaces of humans. It is precisely here that the involvement and concrete participation opportunities for large and diverse parts of the population are of particular importance for the development of concepts in their communities or region. A key instrument thereby is the Local or Regional Agenda 21, the further propagation of which is also to the fore in an action programme for the action field “Austria as a Living Space”. In regional planning, application of the strategic environmental impact assessment opens up new participation opportunities.

- At the **corporate level**, dialogue, cooperation, participation and co-determination are to be expanded further. Sustainable development will be a great challenge for some industries, and participation by the employees will be able to contribute significantly towards mastering this challenge.
- An important instrument of participation in the future will be the **Aarhus Convention**, which is also a challenge to the self-image of public administration. This international convention regulates access to environmental information, public participation in approval procedures, and access to courts in environmental issues. This convention came into effect on October 30, 2001, and both the European Union and the member states are currently working on its implementation in national and Community law. In Austria, its implementation will result in a number of changes in the field of access to environmental information, and in better public participation in plant approval procedure.
- In order to **learn participation**, suitable framework conditions are necessary: Thereby, initiatives must already be taken at the pre-school level and pilot projects developed at the school level, youth organisations with a voice and decision-making competence must be established at various levels, and the learning of participation as a part of everyday culture must be promoted with appropriate offers.

Sustainable development requires a new culture of dealing with conflicts.

Conflicting interests must not be ignored. Instead, a social dialogue on sustainable development must be initiated and viable long-term solutions must be developed. Mediation offers a suitable instrument for making conflicts of interest transparent and resolving them constructively and with consensus. Thus, attention can also be paid to a balance of interests between the various target groups in the implementation.

Co-determination is only possible on the basis of sufficient knowledge. A transparent information offer serves to provide the foundations for all social groups. This requires more information about the status quo of the environment and about the interactions between ecological, economic and social trends, the monitoring described in this Strategy and based upon suitable indicators, and the system of environmental quality targets described in the section “Living Spaces”.

Sustainable development requires commitment and motivation. Implementation of this Strategy will only succeed, if everyone in Austria is familiar with the concept of sustainable development, shares the values and fundamental orientation behind it, and finds the appropriate opportunities for action and participation in his own life environment. With broad communication and target group-oriented public relations work, sensitisation, information and participation of large parts of the population is to be assured. With stronger public relations efforts, sustainability must be presented as a concept that affects every single one of us in our daily life and in our personal actions. Concrete examples should make

sustainable development something that we can grasp and experience, and should demonstrate the possibilities that every one of us has.

A Learning Strategy

Learning from the implementation and making further development possible through evaluations

The implementation of the strategy is a dynamic and continuous process of learning. In order to design the Austrian Sustainability Strategy as a “learning strategy”, special attention must be paid to its further development. Thereby, both experiences from its implementation and new findings must be taken into consideration. After a period of three years, the key objectives, the implementation process and the achieved results of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy are to be subjected to an independent evaluation. Thereby, the standards for evaluation with regard to usefulness, feasibility, fairness and accuracy developed by the European evaluation societies are to be applied. The individual working processes and progress reports are to be subjected to a meta-analysis, with a special focus on consistency, efficiency and transparency. Experiences with participative procedures, the breadth of their application and their acceptance will be analysed and taken into account in the further development of the strategy. The Austrian Sustainability Strategy is oriented towards further development and designed as a “learning strategy”:

- **Networking:** With the establishment of the “Committee for a Sustainable Austria” and its support from an expert panel, the institutions and individuals involved will be networked, various accesses and fields of action will be linked, and direct exchange will be promoted. Regular meetings by the Committee will allow for periodical reflection of the progress made in the implementation process in the form of reviews and forecasts. Through decentralised implementation, the know-how of the local actors is to be used and practical solutions are to be realised quickly.
- **Openness:** Participation opportunities and dialogues with target groups will ensure that the implementation of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy will take place in an open process that is transparent for the target groups and citizens alike. Through publication of the condensed progress reports and the evaluations, and with key indicators, the general public is to be informed regularly about progress and new challenges.
- **Reflectiveness:** The annual progress reports and the use of internationally coordinated indicators will allow fast and systematic feedback. The integration of independent researchers in the external evaluation planned after three years is a major framework condition for offering an unprejudiced view of the development of non-sustainable trends and possible implementation impediments.
- **Error tolerance:** Through process support, organised learning processes for everyone involved are to be initiated in an atmosphere of error tolerance. Regular feedback should motivate the implementation actors to rethink and modify their attitudes and behaviour not only on the basis of expert knowledge, but also on the basis of their own experience.

Suitable mechanisms for this are, for example, review processes, dialogue moderation and conflict mediation.

- **Further development:** Further development of the Strategy is already an integral part of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy. However, this further development should relate not only to its contents, but also take learning effects in the implementation of strategies as an instrument of political action and coordination (governance) into account. This „meta-learning“ should aim to enhance the problem-solving competence of society.
- **Internationality:** An international exchange of experience between the people and institutions involved in the conception and implementation of national sustainability strategies is to be supported (e.g. through direct exchange of experience, events, etc.).
- **Institutional innovations:** With the preparation of this Strategy, we are taking new paths in the field of an integrated environmental, economic and social policy. The Strategy was prepared with participative elements, process-accompanying moderation, and intensive coordination with the actors. Further institutional innovations are expected to result from its implementation.

With these elements, the latest experiences, technical progress, international developments and scientific findings are to be integrated continuously in the implementation and further development of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy. With a new culture of cooperation, the efforts of all the relevant actors for sustainable development will be focussed and oriented towards mutual goals. Thus, this Strategy fulfils a leading and coordinating function on the way towards a sustainable Austria – a milestone that will secure the quality of life of present and future generations.

ANNEX

**The Austrian Strategy for Sustainable
Development**

FIRST STEPS AND INNOVATIVE EXAMPLES

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First Steps **Programmes, Projects and Initiatives** **for Implementation of the Concept**

The “**First Steps**” presented in the following are an integral part of the Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development. They include a selection of the initiatives, projects and programmes already introduced or about to be introduced by the relevant ministries and interest groups, which are available at the time of adoption and which form the first concrete implementation measures within the relevant areas of competence for achieving the key objectives for the four fields of action defined in the Strategy.

FIELD OF ACTION “QUALITY OF LIFE IN AUSTRIA”

Action Programme: Education and Communication for Sustainability

The Agenda 21 of Rio underlines how important education and communication are for the initiation and implementation of sustainable development. The objective of this action programme is to develop a package of measures for specific education and learning processes in all parts of society. The aim is to implement the challenge of providing a clear outline for the concept of sustainable development with age-, situation- and target group-specific treatment and suitable communication measures, of supporting the establishment of social skills (problem-solving skill, shaping skill, conflict skill, networked thinking, solidarity), and promoting self-organisation and new forms of cooperation (interdisciplinary cooperation, cooperation between various fields of everyday, social and political life, and between various sectors of education).

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

Project “Environmental Orientation of Vocational Training and Further Education”

The small and medium-sized enterprises form the backbone of the Austrian economy. Therefore, they are very important for the business location and its sustainable development. The involvement of teachers at vocational schools in the implementation of sustainability strategies is therefore of particular significance. The project “Environmental Orientation of Vocational Training and Further Education” addresses this target group. The project focuses on issues of eco-efficiency, ecological awareness building, and the safety and health of employees. Basic information for all industries and materials for all occupational classes with specific ecological responsibility, e.g. the chemical industry, have already been developed with linking of social and ecological issues.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management; project carrier: Forum Umweltbildung

Preparation of Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming

Within the broad scope of gender mainstreaming (GM), the varying nature of standardisation projects and other measures should be taken into account. As the next step therefore, each ministry should prepare a generally valid guideline for standardisation projects on the one hand, as well as the instruments for other measures and decision-making processes on the other hand. Based on a legislative GM project and a general GM project, each ministry should gather and evaluate its experiences: The documentation of these experiences should ultimately be integrated in the preparation of a generally valid guideline for both areas. These guidelines

should form the basis for an assessment of standard projects and other measures under the aspect of GM.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, and other relevant ministries.

Study: “Investigation of the Male Image in Society”

Emancipation policy cannot be limited to one gender only, but is also closely related to the evolution of the male self-image: “Emancipation” in terms of the development of a relationship and differentiation (of identity) of both genders. Gender mainstreaming means that the specific interests of both genders are taken into account by policies. Therefore, it is important to investigate these gender-specific interests, the reflection of which has already become a matter of course in feminist research, from the male perspective as well.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, and other relevant ministries; project carrier: Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Value Research

Accompanied Transition into Retirement

In 2002, the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations is starting a model project in Upper Austria, in which retirement preparation courses are to be offered to those employees of selected large and medium-sized enterprises and in the public sector who are about to retire. These courses will deal with the health, psychological and legal aspects of life after retirement, and should motivate retired people to do voluntary work in their retirement. This should allow people to prepare themselves for this new phase in life, thus also preventing suicides in the first years of retirement.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, and other relevant ministries.

Social Dimensions in Consumption: The New Goods and Company Test

The combined goods and company test, which evaluates not only product quality but also the social and ecological quality of a company, and which is addressed here as a source of information for consumers and as a requirement profile for companies, is an ideal instrument for better integration of the market process in the social environment. In addition, this comprehensive quality standard can also be used inter alia as an investment requirement profile (for interested actors). If the new goods and company test becomes as accepted by consumers as the old goods test was, then the new, sustainable framework conditions strived for by many – consumers, employees, entrepreneurs – could evolve. The test criteria for this integrated goods and company test could also be used for investment decisions. Not only for private investments, but also for those funds in which socio-political actors with long-term interests have a stake in decision-making, like the trade unions in pension funds for example. The test evaluates:

- Environmental responsibility (in product design, in the production process, with regard to raw materials, choice of vendors, transport; consumption of energy, packaging materials, waste and emission burden);
- Social responsibility (compensation, regulation of working hours and how employees are treated, further education measures, consideration for problem groups and compliance with worldwide standards);
- Openness of information (for employees, customers, consulting and complaint procedures, service policies).

Responsible for implementation: Federal Chamber of Labour together with partners in business; project carrier: Consumer Information Association.

Sustainability and Religion(s) – A Pilgrimage

The aim of the project “Sustainability and Religion(s) – A Pilgrimage” is to stimulate the ideas of sustainable development through various measures of cooperation between various world and natural religions and philosophies, between the sciences and schools, and between schools and the public, and to discuss the results of sustainability research in the context of theological and/or pedagogical reflection: What are the thematic challenges of our common future? “Sustainability and Religion(s)” will therefore be the theme of a conceptual and actual pilgrimage on which environmental-ethical concepts will be developed further, equity and responsibility for the universe will be concretised, practical projects (especially in schools) will be stimulated and promoted, and intercultural learning opportunities will be created.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture; project carrier: Austrian Institutes for Religious Education, and Institute for Integrative Tourism and Leisure Research.

The Community as a Living Space for All Generations: Development of an Audit: “Family- and Child-friendly Community”

The aim of this project is to make the quality of life and the factors that constitute and influence it visible: What do children and families need in order to feel good in the place where they live, in their community? What framework conditions are necessary, and how does the community know whether the measures taken really meet the needs and desires of the families? The audit analyses all the services provided by the community that are relevant for family policy, such as e.g. social and cultural infrastructure, family support, leisure facilities, childcare, and the action fields, such as e.g. environment and mobility, and identifies areas that require improvement. On this basis, the community can identify its own strengths and weaknesses, and define and implement need-oriented measures for the future of the families and children. An external consultant supports and accompanies the communities in this process. The aim of this model project is to provide the communities with an instrument with which they can determine how family- and child-friendly they are, and the direction in which they want to go together with their

local citizens. The model will be developed on the basis of the fields of action for communal family policy, and should result in an implementation guideline for a community audit and a handbook for communal family policy in one year. After successful implementation of the audit, the community receives a certificate as a “family- and child-friendly community”.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, together with 9 model communities.

“Youth Forum” – Participation in Youth Policy

The Youth Forum consists of young people aged 16 to 23, and it is a consulting body and think tank for the ministry. The young people are involved in a wide variety of conceptual and organisational working groups, make proposals for youth policy to the minister, and they also organise their own events. The involvement of representatives from official youth organisations and open youth work is regulated in the Federal Youth Representation Act (2001) and is thus anchored in legislation. Inter alia, this Act provides that in all matters concerning the interests of young people in Austria the federal youth representatives have the same standing as the legal interest groups that represent employees, entrepreneurs, farmers, and the Austrian Senior Citizen Council.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations

Research for Sustainable Development

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture plans to develop and establish the research policy target system and – based thereupon – research policy instruments and measures to serve the stimulation of innovations for sustainable development of society and the environment. Moreover, innovative methods and concepts directly relevant to sustainable development are to be advanced, e.g.:

- Integration of education (focus: schools), art, politics and practice in research initiatives (motto: future partnerships in science for sustainable development);
- Quality assurance and evaluation in inter- and transdisciplinary sustainability research;
- Citizen participation;
- More democracy in R&D policy;
- Gender mainstreaming in sustainability research.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

EcoForesights Austria – Ecological Future Research

EcoForesights Austria is a research programme for future options and quality of life. The focus of this research programme is on how society handles Austria's life and business foundations: EcoForesights Austria investigates the effects and risks of the use of natural resources. It also investigates changes in nature and their impact on society and economy. The ecological, economic and socio-cultural impacts of environmentally relevant phenomena such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, sealing of surfaces, are presented. This research project is based on partnership between the sciences and the general public. In a practical dialogue, forecasts and scenarios are developed with which future-oriented decisions can be prepared. The equality of opportunities and equity of opportunities for men and women should also be integrated in this project. The scientific and educational objective of the research programme is bundled in the expression "Ecoresearch-Network Austria". Central issues are, e.g.:

- Security in the supply of renewable raw materials and energy sources;
- Security of the health service through improved environmental and food quality (natural production);
- Security in disaster prevention;
- Security in sustainable management of ecosystems (biological diversity as a foundation of life and business);
- Security and social stability through regional partnerships (urban – rural – suburban).

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

Research in the Field of Renewable Energy and Eco-efficiency

With more use of biomass as a source of energy, issues of energy, environmental and regional policy can be responded to – whereby Austria plays a leading technological role in this field at the international level. Apart from the use of biomass as a source of energy (small units for households, larger plants in the range from 0.5 to 10 MW, bio-diesel, biogas, thermal gasification of biomass), the research efforts of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology in the field of renewable energy sources are focused on active and passive use of solar energy. This focus of research has contributed towards Austria ranking third in Western Europe with regard to the share of bio-energy (12%) in the primary energy supply, and this share is to be increased. With the initiative "energy-efficient universities", the creativity and knowledge potential available at the universities is to be mobilised in order to reduce energy consumption and energy costs even further.

Numerous research projects are being commissioned in the field of eco-efficient processes and products, and use of renewable raw materials. For example, work has been initiated in a research concept "Cleaner Production" (CP), whereby a major focus is on propagation of the research results. In addition, there is strong international networking of the Austrian research efforts in the field of Cleaner Production, e.g. through integration in the international PREPARE network. In the field of ecological production and product design, the issue of raw materials is

important: The aim is to identify the specific properties and potential of selected renewable raw materials, and to make them available for use in accordance with modern requirements.

The latest results from the numerous research, development and implementation reports for the commissioned projects are published by the Research Forum of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (web address: www.forschungsforum.at).

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

Delocalisation of Education: Research Needs and Strategic Planning

The aim of this project is to delegate education not only to centres (schools, universities, other educational facilities), but also to enhance the intensity of education at work and in everyday processes in order to optimise the working population's demand for training and further education. Approaches are, inter alia:

- Methods of corporate and practical training for apprentices and young skilled workers;
- Pedagogical and social effects and strategies for exchange between skilled workers;
- Acquisition of key qualifications in practical learning;
- Possibilities and forms of further education in companies;
- Tele-learning and distance learning as a chance for corporate qualification;
- Training and further education of corporate trainers and educators.

The aim is to develop new forms of information and consulting with regard to education and work that will facilitate access to qualifications. In addition to collection and evaluation of the results of research projects, aids are to be developed that will promote decentralised, sustainable qualification instead of centralised qualification, or that will optimise the centralised and decentralised forms of education. Thus, a major contribution will be made towards the learning location discourse. The strategic planning concerns both optimisation of corporate forms of education and cooperation between companies and educational facilities, as well as the use of new forms of learning. The first results – especially of the development work – will be published in mid-2002.

Responsible for implementation: Austrian Chamber of Commerce; project carrier: Austrian Institute for Education Research

“Eco-label for Schools and Educational Facilities”

The “Eco-label for Schools” introduces a new system of environmentally oriented performance evaluation for schools. The aim is to reward both the ecological-technical and the environmental-pedagogical performance of schools. Especially in the field of compulsory education, this system also confronts the communities that are responsible for the schools with the key objectives and requirements of sustainable development. With the Eco-label for Schools Directive, which came into force on January 1, 2002, criteria have been defined for the following areas:

- Environmental management and social school development

- Environmental education
- Health promotion and ergonomics
- Environmentally friendly purchasing
- Sparing use of resources
- Measures to avoid and recycle waste
- Initiatives for more environmentally friendly mobility
- Design, maintenance and use of outdoor facilities in schools

This additional eco-label should document the key role of schools in an “education for sustainable development in everyday life”, and present this role to the outside as a school profile.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management; project carrier: Forum Environmental Education

Project “Better Understanding of Environmental Economic Issues”

The aim of the project is to provide information about environmentally economic solutions and fundamental problems as the basis for as broad and well-informed participation by the citizens as possible. The issues are as follows:

- To achieve an understanding for environmental economic relationships;
- To enhance the knowledge of problems, solutions and instruments;
- To intensify the mutual dialogue between the sciences and the population;
- To address various target groups with specific materials, and to achieve a broad impact;
- To convey contents using the Internet, in order to be able to address different target groups more easily.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, and Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture; project carrier: Forum Environmental Education

Life-long Prophylaxis

The WHO defines health as a state of comprehensive physical, mental and social well-being, and not only as the freedom from illness and weakness. This is the sense in which prophylaxis is understood and developed. A main starting point for prophylaxis lies in the field of mother-and-child prophylaxis. The Mother-and-Child Pass examinations introduced in 1974, for example, have made a significant contribution towards reducing the infant mortality rate and mortality rate of mothers.

These prophylactic measures must be continued and expanded in future. The order of priority for the expansion proposals by the Senior Medical Officer is determined in accordance with the “Principles and Practice of Screening for Disease” defined by the World Health Organisation.

The prophylactic Mother-and-Child Pass examinations, which continue until pre-school age, are followed by examinations by the school doctor at least once a year until the end of compulsory education (maximum up to the age of 18).

Over the age of 19, the primary objective of prophylactic examinations is early diagnosis. Thereby, the main focus is on arteriosclerosis, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, disorders of the metabolism and chronic respiratory disease. There is special need for action with regard to the establishment of quality-assured mammography screening.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations

Diet and Diet-related Diseases

Access to a broad range of healthy and safe foods is a fundamental human right. An adequate supply of nutritious and safe foods is a basic requirement for protecting and promoting human health.

Diet-related diseases affect a significant part of the population. These range from directly diet-related diseases to diseases that are indirectly influenced by diet. Obesity, in particular, is a problem for national health. It increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, certain forms of cancer, and diabetes. According to estimates, about one third of the cardiovascular diseases, which are the main cause of death in Austria, are related to an unbalanced diet, and a similar proportion of cancer cases could be prevented by a better diet.

This underlines the need to develop an adequate food and diet policy that goes beyond the current standard, both to protect and promote human health, and to reduce the costs incurred by diet-related diseases.

Food safety, diet behaviour and assuring a sustainable supply of foods are the central issues of this policy. The Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety is a major step in this direction.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Mental Health

Mental health refers not only to psychiatric health, but also to the prevention and treatment of psychiatric diseases, and it is a central element of health in general. According to the WHO, every fourth human being is affected by a massive psychiatric impairment that requires professional care at least once in his life.

First steps have been taken in the Austrian National Psychiatry Report by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Social Psychiatry on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health, in which it was possible for the first time to collate existing data on psychiatric and psychosocial care, and to present the status quo of the measures and services currently provided with regard to the mental health of Austria. This first national overview is the basis for further measures in the field of prevention and for a sustainable structural development in the field of psychosocial care. The establishment of a national competence centre should provide significant scientific and practice-oriented findings in this field.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations

Sustainable Strategies to Protect the Population from Infectious Diseases

With the spreading of HIV/AIDS at the latest, the public health aspect of infectious diseases changed fundamentally. The major epidemics of our century require global action. Dramatic increases in the eastern part of the WHO region Europe have shown that the EU and especially Austria must be more active in controlling these diseases not only at home and within the EU, but also in other countries, both for humanitarian reasons and for our own protection.

A major aspect of this process, which is currently being established, is the development of an efficient electronic reporting system that will be linked with both the EU and with the WHO once it is completed. Moreover, special units for quality assurance and control of diagnostics ("reference centres") will be connected to this monitoring system, which will also be capable of identifying threats to the population – e.g. the intentional release of pathogens (bioterrorism) – at an early stage and of taking appropriate action.

Stronger propagation of results from the mentioned analyses both for Austria and for comparable EU states, and close monitoring of the development of infectious diseases in other countries, especially the major poverty-related diseases HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, will be an integral part of the Austrian concept for fighting infectious diseases.

Possible deficiencies with regard to diagnostics, prophylaxis and therapy will be taken into account in a comprehensive research concept. This concept will be implemented in close conjunction with the 6th Framework Programme for Development and Technology of the EU. Thereby, Austria intends to play a leading role in the development of further research and technology programmes in this area.

With regard to immunisation prophylaxis, and especially with regard to the immunisation of neonates and children, the Austrian immunisation concept is to be optimised and perfected in

terms of the inclusion of immunisation against other infectious diseases and also in terms of the acquisition of new vaccines. Thereby, a special focus will be on consideration for the latest research findings.

The objective is comprehensive and life-long immunisation prophylaxis.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations

FIELD OF ACTION “AUSTRIA AS A DYNAMIC BUSINESS LOCATION”

Impulse Programme “Sustainable Management”

With the impulse programme “Sustainable Management”, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology plans to provide significant innovation impulses for the Austrian economy through sustainability-oriented developments, thus supporting the structural shift towards eco-efficient management through research, technological development, demonstration and propagation measures. This requires that new approaches and questions be thematised, and the most innovative and creative actors be gained for the ambitious objectives of sustainability-oriented management. The programme, which is scheduled for a period of 5 years, aims to achieve a more sparing use of natural resources, consolidation of Austria’s competitive edge with regard to the development of sustainable technologies, and positive economic and employment effects. The conception of the impulse programme provides on the one hand for pro-active thematisation of specific issues, and on the other hand exploits the opportunities of open competition. Thematic invitations for tenders set a clear focus, but at the same time a creative diversity of technical and economic solutions should be possible. Feedback and experiences from the invitations for tender carried out each year will be taken into account in later invitations for tenders in the sense of an institutionalised learning process.

Offensive public relations work, regional information events, and support and consulting even during the invitation for tenders should appeal to a large number of bidders, and result in high-quality project proposals. Clearly communicated tender conditions and evaluation by an international jury guarantee fair competition that is transparent for everyone involved. Intensive networking and coordination of the projects within the programme theme result in greater overall effectiveness. The transfer of information and know-how, and support for pilot and demonstration projects should guarantee the implementation and propagation of innovations. Accompanying measures such as the organisation of competitions, as well as qualification measures and start-up initiatives should help that the programme targets are achieved.

Within the impulse programme, there are three programme lines with the themes “house of the future”, “factory of the future” and “energy systems of the future”. The “house of the future” refers to residential and office buildings that are markedly more energy efficient than today’s standard, which use renewable sources of energy and renewable raw materials, and which are not much more expensive than conventional buildings. The objective of the “factory of the future” is to have trailblazing demonstration and pilot projects in the field of sustainable technological development within the next five years. Examples could be innovative production processes, future-oriented products or companies. The programme line “energy systems of the future” focuses on the advancement of energy systems in accordance with the principles of the impulse programme. In particular, it aims at increasing the share of renewable energy sources on the electricity market by a significant factor while at the same time maintaining the high quality of supply. As one result of the impulse programme Sustainable Management, the construction of an innovative model building within the scope of the programme line “house of the future” is

planned at the end of the programme period. Work will be started on the first “houses of the future” in autumn 2002. The establishment of a supply network in compliance with the criteria of the programme line “energy systems of the future” is planned within a selected model region.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

Benchmark System for the Sustainability Level of Enterprises

In this project, a benchmark system for enterprises will be tested in an exemplary manner, which will indicate the status of an enterprise with regard to sustainability using the so-called PSI (Process Steering Index). The basic method was first used in a “cost control project” at AUDI ten years ago, and has since then been developed further in more than 140 management consultations for small and large enterprises. The core element is a holistic view of the enterprise, consisting of four impact factors: (a) the human factor – coined by creativity, (b) the corporate structure, (c) the corporate culture at the informal level, and (d) the environmental factor, i.e. the external impact of measures – on the market, on the environment, and on the social environment. With the help of soft and hard fact measuring instruments, the constant changes in the enterprise as a whole can be identified both with regard to its economic growth and future perspectives on the market, and with regard to the future overall impact on the internal corporate environment (e.g. innovation capability). The objective of the companies should be to harmonise the four impact factors in a “dynamic equilibrium” based on a permanent coordination process, in order to achieve sustainable overall success.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, and Austrian Institute for Economic Development (Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut Österreich)

Modernisation of the Administration

The main focus of the current government programme and the results of numerous ongoing administrative reform initiatives already available show that the service orientation of the state is improving continuously, and that customer-oriented design of the administration is the supreme goal of action. Deregulation – i.e. the shift away from an excessive production of legislative acts that burden the administration – is a permanent mandate. This is ensured by a “Deregulation Contract”, which includes an audit of the impacts of legislation on the population and the economy. Moreover, it has been agreed with the Provinces that a number of laws and individual provisions should be abated or streamlined considerably.

A wide range of e-government initiatives demonstrates how the exchange of information between authorities and companies can be improved and procedures accelerated and made less bureaucratic using modern technologies.

The range of help.gv services is being improved and expanded continuously, thus making a significant contribution towards achieving key objective 7 of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy. Especially the expansion of online official channels, implementation of the electronic signature

and police clearance certificates as the next online official channel are worth mention as objectives.

Responsible for implementation: all departments

The Administrative Reform Act 2001 („Verwaltungsreformgesetz“)

In the Administrative Reform Act with its more than 30 Articles, the district authorities and town councils are upgraded as the primary competent administrative bodies, the administrative channels are streamlined, the “one-stop shop” principle is realised, the independent administrative senates are established as appeal bodies, and many other measures of organisational and procedural reform are realised.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Public Service and Sports

General Structural Reforms

Within the scope of structural reforms, synergy effects are used to transfer federal tasks to the Provinces (e.g. road administration), and to streamline the major areas of justice, finance and police, which will also result in quality improvements.

Responsible for implementation: all departments, Provinces

Performance Ratios and Controlling

For professional controlling, a system of performance ratios for the federal administration has been established over the last few years. Every year, a performance report is published with indicators from the core areas of public administration. This should contribute towards improving the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative services. Performance ratios are an essential requirement for an effect-oriented control of administration and for national and international benchmarking. Within the scope of a pilot project to introduce a balanced score card in the field of the nutrition agency, it is possible to introduce sustainability in addition to economic management and customer orientation as a field that determines the controlling of results.

Responsible for implementation: all departments

e-Government Initiatives

In addition to the electronic land register, finance online and the central register of individuals, *help.gv* is the central electronic citizens' service platform on the Internet. Currently, *help.gv* offers information about some 100 issues (thereof 35 for entrepreneurs), forms, the possibility to make special inquiries in the guest book, and the first online official channels (registration inquiries, registration of dogs, communal tax declaration...) with an electronic payment option via *bezahlen.at*. *help-business.gv* offers special services for entrepreneurs. Especially in small and medium-sized enterprises that cannot or do not want to purchase legal know-how, the entrepreneurs can benefit from information about the official channels for 40 “life issues” relevant to business. The service includes the provision of forms, the possibility to make special

inquiries in the guest book, and the first online official channels (e.g. registration inquiries, dog registration, communal tax declaration, trade registration) with an (intended) electronic payment option via *bezahlen.at*. The start-up guide “Gründungsfahrplan”, a special service for sole proprietorships and companies, visualises the optimal start-up procedure for a business.

The electronic signature already exists. It is to be implemented for the first time in the procedure for issuing police clearance certificates.

Other projects in the field of e-government include nationwide introduction of the electronic file in federal administration, the Virtual Marketplace Austria, which will be used especially to handle federal procurement electronically, and the initiative “e-law”, which should contribute towards an acceleration and quality improvement of legislation with electronic preparation of legislation.

Responsible for implementation: all departments, Provinces, communities

Sustainable Economic Growth in the Region

The vision of sustainable development that guarantees the desirable quality of life for future generations requires concrete implementation and active involvement at the municipal, regional and business level. Therefore, this project is to involve the trades in a regional sustainability project for eastern Styria for the first time, in order to underline the key role of regional business in the sustainability process of a region. With regional cooperation between companies in the same and in different lines of business, many synergy effects so far unexploited are to be used and approaches for sustainable development (local closing of material cycles, use of renewable raw materials, combination of production and service, reduction of transport volumes, etc.) are to be established.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, and Austrian Institute for Economic Development (Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut Österreich); initiator: Province of Styria

Orientation of Federal/Provincial Research Cooperation Towards the Concept of Sustainable Development

At the Provincial Governors' Conference on October 23, 2001, the “Federal/Provincial Research Cooperation NEW” was adopted: The existing thematic focuses of Federal/Provincial Cooperation were to be expanded to include all new, future-oriented areas of mutual interest, taking the full research and technological development potential of the federal administration and the Provinces into account. The objective of this reorientation in the fields of research, technology and innovation within the scope of “Federal/Provincial Cooperation NEW” is to be sustainable development. The projects carried out within the scope of this cooperation should be distinguished by their innovative nature and their application orientation, and they should be in harmony with the objectives of the federal and provincial research policy. In this sense, the following research areas (thematic focuses) are mentioned as examples:

- Environment and energy
- Diet and health
- New products and processes
- Transport, mobility, tourism

A periodical review and further development of the research areas will be carried out by the partners.

Responsible for implementation: Provinces, together with the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, and the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour

Pilot Project “Sustainability Reporting”

Based on the preliminary work by the Global Reporting Initiative, a guideline for sustainability reports by enterprises is to be developed. This should provide a management tool that helps companies to present, evaluate and continuously improve their performance and progress. In addition to the establishment of quality standards for such areas, the basis for benchmarking is to be established with integrated ratios. The sustainability reports should be based on an internal process, which – like the Agenda processes – is concept-oriented and participative. Therefore, the experiences with corporate Agenda 21 already gathered to date in Styria are to be developed further within the scope of the first implementation steps.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management,, and Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, in cooperation with partners from business and industry

Methods and Instruments to Evaluate Sustainable Development

The evaluation of sustainable development, whether ex-ante, concurrently or ex-post, will in future have a particular value within the scope of implementation of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy and for measuring the progress made with regard to target achievement. This requires placing a focus on the development of methods and instruments for evaluation, and for networking the relevant research and development projects within the European Union. The aim of a first project is to establish the methodical foundations for implementation of a sustainability impact assessment at the level of policies, plans and programmes, in order to assess their ecological, economic and social impacts at an early stage (ex-ante), and to provide the foundations necessary within the scope of the political decision-making process. This instrument for the national level is to be developed with consideration for the work being conducted at the EU level. Thereby it will be necessary – in analogy with the EU level – to determine the extent to which further development of the strategic impact assessment, which is suitable as an integration and auditing instrument for all levels of decision-making (programmes, plans, policies, legal acts, strategies, concepts), and – based on an appropriate target system – the sustainability aspects can be taken into account in future. Another major focus is on the establishment and propagation of standards for the evaluation of sustainable development.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, in cooperation with partners from science and research

Analysis of Environmentally Counterproductive National Support Measures

The abolition and restructuring of environmentally damaging national support measures has been discussed at the international level for some time. Apart from OECD activities, this issue is also becoming increasingly important within the European Union. The EU's Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and the memorandum by the Commission for integration of environmental protection in economic policy recommend the elimination of environmentally counterproductive subsidies. In terms of implementation of these Broad Economic Policy Guidelines, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management has commissioned a project in which a detailed analysis of the areas energy, transport and agriculture is to be conducted. Thereby, a broad approach in the sense of the OECD definition of environmentally counterproductive support measures was taken. Accordingly, this project investigates not only subsidies and tax benefits, but also public spending and legal provisions with regard to their environmental impacts. The study results, which will be available in spring 2002, will be used as input for the discussion of reforms with regard to environmentally counterproductive support measures.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Action Programmes to Promote Sustainable Technologies and Services for Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency

The broad marketing of desired technologies and services requires a holistic approach that takes into account and supports all the aspects of technology launches – from technical issues through issues of quality assurance, legal framework conditions, the qualification of relevant occupational classes, to the development of cost-effective and efficient promotion instruments required in some cases. In particular, it also comprises so-called “soft instruments” such as information, consulting, training and further education. Theme-oriented programmes with a time limit (action programmes) are particularly suitable for this task. They must be regarded as particularly cost-efficient with regard to the achievement of targets, and they are characterised by specific and flexible management of development processes, clearly defined targets and quality assurance, as well as target group orientation and active involvement of the concerned actors and multipliers. In concrete, this instrument should be applied within the scope of implementation of the Austrian climate strategy – in the fields of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency for example (e.g. contracting for service buildings or innovative construction and renovation).

The European initiatives for a sustainable energy policy primarily pursue the goal of compliance with the obligation to reduce greenhouse gases and to minimise economic risks by reducing the import dependence of European energy supply:

- Energy efficiency: Implementation of the energy efficiency action plan of the European Union (reduction of energy intensity by an average one percentage point per year over the level otherwise to be expected for the EU as a whole);
- Renewable energy sources: More initiatives to achieve the goal of the EU White Book for Renewables (target: increase in the share of renewable energy sources by 6% to 12% by the year 2010 for the EU as a whole);
- Implementation of the EU Directive on the “Promotion of electricity produced from renewable energy sources” (increase in the share of renewable energy sources in total power supply for Austria from currently 70 to 78% by the year 2010, based on the assumption that gross domestic power supply for the year 2010 will be 56.1 TWh);
- Implementation of the planned directive “Energy Performance of Buildings” and of the directive “Biofuels”.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, and Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Project “Ethical-Ecological Investments”

The aim of the project is to support and consolidate the market for ethical-ecological investments in Austria. This is to be achieved with increased public relations and information work, a revival of supply and demand, and by changing the framework conditions (e.g. mandatory declaration of pension funds with regard to their investment criteria). Activities to enhance the quality of the market are also planned.

In January 2002, the brochure “Mehr Wert: Ökologische Geldanlagen” (More Value: Ecological Investments) was published by the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, which offers an overview of the investment market in the German-speaking world – including a specific Austrian section. The platform “Ethical-ecological Investment”, which was founded in 2001 by the Austrian Association for Environment and Technology (ÖGUT), serves as an information hub for relevant activities in Austria. Associated measures are the completion of a website (<http://www.gruenesgeld.at>) in January 2002, which offers an overview and latest information about ethical-ecological investments, the organisation of an event with various stakeholders (banks, insurance companies, etc.) to consolidate and expand the range of ethical-ecological investment products offered in Austria, and general public relations work with the aim of keeping the subject of “ethical-ecological investment” an issue in the media and in the general public.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management; project carrier: ÖGUT Platform “Ethical-ecological Investment”

Action Programme Sustainability and Diet

Food quality in terms of sustainability goes far beyond food safety in the narrower sense. The aim of this action programme is to implement a new food model for an ecological, ethical and socially compatible, regionally anchored food production, and to guarantee this with an efficient monitoring system “from fork to farm”. With declarations of origin for raw materials and clear product labelling, these new quality standards should be integrated in pricing and purchase decisions and promote sustainable consumption habits. With the establishment of the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety, a central instrument for promoting this new food model will be created.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, and Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations

Action Programme Organic Farming

The aim of this initiative is to consolidate Austria's leading role both at the European level and globally with regard to organic farming, and to increase the organically managed farming surfaces by 50% within a period of 5 years with a bundle of measures, whereby all the possibilities of marketing in this area are to be exploited optimally in collaboration with representatives from the organic farming associations.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Action Programme Renewable Resources and Energy Sources

The promoted use of domestic renewable raw materials and energy sources as a substitute for fossil or synthetic raw materials, process materials or end products is a central approach for combining more ecological efficiency with higher value added from the region in a sustainable economy. The aim of this action programme is to achieve technological leadership in a partnership between agriculture and forestry, trade and industry. This is to be achieved with measures in the field of research and technological development, through market incentives and marketing impulses, and through concerted activities in the field of logistics, as well as with information and quality management in the production chain. Moreover, by reducing dependence on the import of fossil raw materials, a high regional value added and international demand is to be created.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Action Programme for Eco-efficiency

A dramatic increase in resource productivity is a fundamental condition for sustainable development. It is Austria's aim to be among the best in the field of resource efficiency, to achieve a lasting location advantage and competitive edge for the Austrian economy through thematic leadership in this field, and to reduce the consumption of non-renewable raw materials and energy sources to one tenth of the current level by the middle of the 21st century, while maintaining the current standard of living. The points for this major challenge will be set in this action programme: in a partnership process between the economy, politics and the administration, ongoing activities in the field of eco-efficiency will be supplemented by a package of measures aimed at increasing the productivity of resources in Austria by a factor of 4 by the year 2010.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, and Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, and Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

Round Table “Ecosocial Market Economy”

At the initiative of the Ministries of Environment and Economic Affairs, the dialogue platform “Ecosocial Market Economy” was established in December 2001 within the scope of the network “Sustainable Austria”. The objective of this platform of high-ranking actors from politics, business and science, which was established under the chairmanship of former vice-chancellor Josef Riegler, is to discuss the economic policy measures associated with sustainable development, and to provide concrete impulses and contributions for the implementation of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy from the business perspective.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, and Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, in cooperation with partners from business and industry

FIELD OF ACTION "AUSTRIA AS A LIVING SPACE"

Development of an "System of Environmental Quality Guidelines"

Environmental quality guidelines have an important function for environmental policy, since they allow an assessment of the environmental status and thus an evaluation of the environmental effectiveness of measures in the various political areas. This is reflected in the resolution by the Environmental Advisors of the Federal Provinces of June 29, 2001: By 2003, a system of environmental quality guidelines is to be established at the provincial and federal level. Thereby, comparability and compatibility of the applied systems is required, both "bottom-up" (with the superordinate systems at the federal level, of the EU) and "top-down" (with regionally specific systems). The federal system of environmental quality guidelines is to serve as the basis for assessment of the environmental status in the planning and development of measures and strategies. In addition, within the scope of sustainable development it will provide information about whether and in which areas the ecological targets have been achieved.

Responsible for implementation: Federal administration (leadership: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management), and Provinces

Biodiversity Monitoring Concept

In order to protect biological diversity as a resource adequately and meaningfully, monitoring of biodiversity is necessary. This is also anchored in the "Convention on Biological Diversity" with Annexes and Declarations (Federal Law Gazette 213/1995, BGBl. Nr. 213/1995 vom 24. März 1995). The biodiversity monitoring to be established for Austria should identify changes, thus also fulfilling the function of an early warning system, among others. With the early detection of cause-effect relationships, it should be possible to take specific measures to guarantee the preservation and promotion of biological diversity. When preparing the concept for biodiversity monitoring, the existing programmes and tasks to be performed at the provincial, federal and international level must also be taken into consideration.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

GMO-free Management Regions: Conception and Analysis of Scenarios and Implementation Steps

The problem of seed that is contaminated with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) has aroused increasing public attention in the last two years. In Austria, rape seed contaminated with GMOs was marketed in the year 2000, and contaminated maize seed was marketed in 2001. Some of the contaminations are GMOs that have not been authorised in the EU in compliance with Directive 90/220/EEC yet. In the light of these events, we must ask ourselves what can be done to prevent the unintentional contamination of seed and harvests – especially in ecological farming. This project in cooperation with the province of Upper Austria

investigates this issue in two ways. The first objective is to investigate issues of pollen range and seed survival of various cultured plants, thus allowing the maximum requirements for spatial and temporal separation of the two production methods (GMO – non-GMO) from the perspective of natural sciences. The second complex deals with the question of which management options are available for guaranteeing GMO-free production, and how they can be integrated in existing regulations.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations

Action Programme Sustainable Water Management

Sustainable water management means protecting and using water resources in such a way that they can still satisfy the needs and demand of future generations without limitations. All water use must be oriented primarily towards the needs of the Austrian population and the requirements of ecology. The following objectives of Austrian water management are associated with the action programme: Preservation of groundwater resources of drinking water quality, and preservation of the natural condition of lakes and rivers; protection of the living spaces from threats by natural hazards; securing of the high environmental standards in nationwide household water management, and optimisation of the use of funds and operational structures in the area of water supply and waste water treatment; integration of the issues of water management in all areas of politics, and consolidation of the water awareness in the population. The water management cooperation in the Danube region must be promoted as a contribution towards cross-border water protection, and towards securing continued peace and stability at the regional level.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, in coordination with the Provinces

Action Programme Sustainable Forest Management

The objectives of this programme are to improve the socio-cultural values and sustainable optimisation of the use of resources in Austrian forests in harmony with the preservation of biological diversity and vitality of forest ecosystems. The main focuses are on improving the instruments for balancing the various stakes in the forest, expansion of job opportunities, increasing income and value added in rural areas in conjunction with the promotion of a sustainable and natural management and optimisation of the forests' function as a protection from natural hazards. Concurrently, a package of measures in the field of research, marketing, training and further education must be developed and implemented.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

“Best Practice Diffusion” as an Instrument of Chemicals Policy

“Best Practice Diffusion” is a mix of instruments with a focus on communication and know-how transfer, be it to consumers or to trade and industry. This mix of measures aims at accelerating the transition to new, more environmentally friendly and less health-damaging technologies – with the help of financial, institutional or technical support in the field of chemicals policy. Examples include promotion measures in the transition from solvent-based paints to water-based paints in certain industries (e.g. furniture industry) or in the transition from chlorinated hydrocarbons to “aqueous systems” in cleaning processes. Another example is the collection point for fire extinguisher chemicals that damage the ozone layer (halons). All users (industry, trade, private individuals) that possess any such chemicals can deliver them to the so-called “Halon Bank” free of charge since 2000, thus saving the high costs of disposal.

Further optimisation potentials with regard to reducing the emission of hazardous substances can be achieved by promoting concepts in which the profit of the individual enterprise depends more on selling the associated services than on selling substances (e.g. cleaning, solvent, reactions). One example is the so-called “chemical leasing” system, where individual companies supply chemical substances required in order to provide a service while remaining the owner. They take the products back after use, treat them, and also act as consultants for the users. The advantage of this concept: It is in the interest of everyone involved to use the relevant substance with maximum efficiency. Currently, surveys are being conducted to determine the companies/lines of business in which “chemical leasing” would seem promising, in order to then select sector-specific focuses for follow-up measures in Austria.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Focus Initiatives Within the Scope of the National Climate Strategy

With regard to achievement of the Kyoto target, the following focus initiatives are planned within the scope of the National Climate Strategy, among others:

- Reduction of heat emissions through thermal insulation repairs, replacement of heating systems, and energy-efficient construction (housing support programmes of the Provinces, energy certificate for buildings, engineering provisions);
- Promotion of heat supply with renewable energy sources (federal, provincial and EU subsidies for biomass heating systems, thermal solar units and local/district heating with biomass/biogas);
- Promotion and further efficiency improvements in communal district heating and the use of industrial waste heat;
- Measures to achieve the statutory targets with regard to the share of renewable energy sources in electric power generation (currently anchored in the Electric Power Industry Organisation Act (Elektrizitätswirtschafts-Organisations-Gesetz): 4% power from wind,

biogenic sources, geothermal sources and photovoltaics by 2007; 8% power from small hydroelectric power plants); further development of statutory and other framework conditions in accordance with advanced EU targets for renewable energy (especially the directive "Power from Renewable Sources") and promotion of combined heat and power production;

- Strategies to reduce power consumption in households and in the service sector; energy efficiency programmes in industry;
- Economic and flexible instruments for emission reduction in industry and in the energy sector (energy taxes with incentive impacts, emission trade, projects abroad within the scope of Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism);
- Measures to achieve a marked reduction in emissions over the current trend in the transport sector (fleet consumption reduction, new drive technologies, biofuels, shift in heavy transport to the railways, expansion of rail infrastructure, mileage-linked road charges and other fiscal steering measures, measures to build awareness, etc.);
- Methane (CH₄) – prevention in waste management through enforcement of the Landfill Ordinance, strategies to avoid waste, waste recycling in terms of energy and materials;
- Methane gas and nitrous oxide (N₂O) – prevention in agriculture (e.g. by exploiting renewable raw materials/biogas for energy);
- Preservation of the multi-functionality and vitality of forests, expansion of biodiversity, and enhancement of the carbon storage function of forests and soil;
- Legislative restrictions or ban on the use of "fluorinated gases" with a high greenhouse effect (H-FHC, SF₆, PFHC) within the scope of chemicals legislation;

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, in cooperation with all the relevant actors (ministries, interest groups)

Action Programme Noise

The aim of this action programme is to promote noise prevention and noise protection in order to reduce the noise burden for the Austrian population. At the national level, a noise reduction strategy for Austria is to be prepared in collaboration with the relevant sectors and institutions, especially on the basis of the pending EU directive on the evaluation and prevention of ambient noise, and the guidelines of the WHO. The focuses are to be on the definition of concrete noise thresholds and action plans for reducing noise burdens and for noise prevention. Concurrently, impulses for innovative noise protection and noise reduction measures are to be provided in competitions and pilot projects, and the problem awareness and acceptance of measures is to be enhanced through information and public relations work.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, Provinces and communities

Action Programme Local and Regional Agenda 21 Offensive

Local and Regional Agenda 21 processes provide important integration and implementation platforms for sustainable development at the local and regional level. The aim of this action programme is further propagation of these participation-oriented bottom-up initiatives, as well as support for supraregional networking in Austria and at the cross-border level. Concrete approaches are the establishment of a coordination office at the federal level, the promotion of Agenda 21 processes for sustainable development at the local and regional level – especially in rural areas – and stronger anchoring of Agenda processes in the instruments for regional development and promotion. Moreover, significant impulses for a sustainable housing system in the sense of “habitat” are to be set, such as: the organisation of a competition, support for pilot projects in sustainable housing systems with focuses on mobility, mix of uses and free space planning, as well as continuation of the cooperation for sustainable housing and communal development in the Alpine region.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, in cooperation with the Provinces

Action Programme Sustainable Transport

Based on the resolution by the EU Council of Transport Ministers in April 2001 to realise a sustainable transport system, the **EST Guidelines** (*Environmentally Sustainable Transport Guidelines*) adopted by the Environment Ministers of the OECD in May 2001, and the pilot study “Sustainable, Environmentally Friendly Transport for Austria”, a national action programme for the mobility and transport sector will be prepared. The main focuses thereby are the promotion of environmentally friendly transport technologies and mobility management, and especially the promotion of innovative pilot projects in these areas.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, and Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Focus Initiative Mobility Management

The focus initiative mobility management pursues three thematic objectives:

Corporate mobility management:

As of 2002, a promotion focus for corporate transport and mobility measures to reduce immissions (target: 40 companies in 2 years) will be implemented within the scope of corporate environmental promotion – accompanied and supported by an information and service package to motivate the companies. The corporate mobility management comprises 4 pillars of traffic volume for which concepts are to be developed and measures for more efficient procedure implemented: (1) Employee travel to/from the place of work, (2) internal traffic (business trips), (3) measures for fleet management, (4) internal freight logistics.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austrian Chamber of Commerce, Institute for Economic Development

Installation of a Mobility Management Network (NE-MO) for Austria

In Austria and other European countries, mobility management projects by towns and communities, schools, companies and mobility providers have proved to be a cost-efficient measure to solve mobility problems. They contribute towards better use and capacity of transport infrastructure, and they promote environmentally and socially compatible forms of transport. The aim of NE-MO is to strengthen mobility management in Austria, and to facilitate the implementation of initiatives and projects. By supporting the broad impact of mobility management, NE-MO is an important catalyser on the way to an environmentally friendly, cost-efficient and safe transport system. With integration in the European Platform for Mobility Management, an international exchange of experience is assured. For more information, visit www.ne-mo.at/.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, towns, municipalities

Soft mobility in tourism

Following the successes in the first phase of the model project “Soft Mobility – Tourism Without Cars” and the positive interim evaluation (more than 100 e-mobiles already in use, successful ecotourism package “Car-free Holidays”, economic and ecological benefits like exceptional overnight stay figures and reduced CO₂ emissions), the second phase is now to be initiated with the following focuses (inter alia): Further development and expansion of transnational cooperation in the field of the successful EU project “Alps Mobility” with partners in Austria, Germany, Italy and France, establishment and consolidation of mobility management in the fields of leisure, shopping and delivery traffic, expansion of support for emission-free or low-emission vehicles, implementation of innovative transport, logistics and infrastructure measures in model communities.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, province of Salzburg, in cooperation with the communities.

Road Safety Programme

On January 8, 2002, the Austrian federal government adopted the first Austrian road safety programme, which contains a clear declaration for systematic road safety efforts and defines the very ambitious overall target of reducing the number of deaths in road traffic by 50 percent by the year 2010 (reference year 2000). The core of the programme is the aim of developing an error-tolerant transport system, whereby an integrative strategy with the involvement of all aspects and institutions relevant to future road safety will be pursued.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

Impulse Programme “Intelligent Transport Systems and Services (IT2S)”

The impulse programme IT2S aims to strengthen the business location Austria through cooperative research projects in the transport technology industry on the one hand, and on the other hand supports the aims of the Austrian and European environmental and transport policy.

The transport systems in Europe face enormous challenges: The increase in traffic flows, high external costs and constantly increasing quality demands with regard to mobility and transport services require new organisational concepts and technological solutions in order to make future transport more efficient, safer, sustainable and user-friendly. Thereby, the technology policy can make a significant contribution. Therefore, the impulse programme IT2S aims to stimulate and develop technological and innovative solutions. At the same time, the research competence in future core areas of transport technology (e.g. integrated satellite navigation, new reloading and drive technologies, material research, mechatronics, etc.) can be enhanced and the competitiveness of an Austrian key industry consolidated. The impulse programme consists of 6 programme lines and various thematic focuses; for the years 2002 and 2003, funds of about 35 million euros are available. The individual programme lines are as follows:

- **MOVE (Mobility and Transport Technology):** The technology programme initiated in 1999 stimulates and supports the development of intermodal transport solutions for passenger and goods transport. MOVE comprises three support focuses: Innovative mobility services with the objective of testing innovative, feasible implementation concepts for environmentally friendly mobility services in passenger transport; TAKE ÖV promotes the implementation of telematics projects to enhance the attractiveness of public transport; Logistik Austria Plus supports cooperative R&D projects to improve efficiency and competitiveness, as well as social acceptance and ecological compatibility of goods transport.
- **Intelligent Infrastructure** is an R&D impulse programme to promote system-integrating telematics applications in the transport sector to produce the organisational and technical conditions required for intermodal transport information services; the aim is to optimise transport management and exploit the transport infrastructure in a better way.

- Technology Initiative Danube comprises the development and implementation of specific FTE projects in the field of shipping, aimed at integrating the Danube in efficient, high-capacity transport and logistics chains.
- Innovative System Railway is an R&D impulse programme to promote innovative technologies and systems in rail transport by supporting interdisciplinary research, demonstration and validation projects with the objective of making railway services more efficient and more attractive.
- AAA Technology Programme (Austrian Advanced Automotive Technology) is an R&D impulse programme aimed at guaranteeing the technological competitiveness of the Austrian automotive industry (vendor industry, small and medium-sized enterprises) in the long term, and it supports the development of an “intelligent, low-emission automobile”.
- Research for sustainable and user-friendly mobility is a programme focus for contract research (feasibility studies, technology outlook and assessment of long-term developments, consideration for the socio-economic dimension of mobility).

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

FIELD OF ACTION “AUSTRIA’S RESPONSIBILITY”

Realisation of a Sustainable Trade Policy

A core area is the implementation of the WTO labour programme adopted in Doha, which includes the objective of sustainable development. Austria will undertake every effort to realise this objective in various areas, in particular to:

- Improve the integration of developing countries in the multilateral trade system; consideration of their specific problems, implementation of the WTO treaty, special and differentiated treatment, establishment of capacity and trade-relevant technical support in numerous areas;
- Provide mutual support for trade and environmental policy goals – negotiations, especially with regard to clarification of the relationship between multilateral environmental agreements/MEAs and the WTO (in cases of membership in both WTO and MEA), and with regard to the liberalisation of environmentally friendly goods and services; focus work in the WTO Committee for Trade and Environment, e.g. with regard to environmentally friendly labelling – with reporting to the 5th Conference of Ministers (including the desirability of future negotiations);
- Preserve the multifunctional role of agriculture; consideration for “non-trade concerns” (such as e.g. food safety) in WTO agriculture negotiations;
- Promote social development through stronger integration in the WTO (the WTO Ministers’ declaration contains only first approaches in this respect); compliance with fundamental labour standards; support for the Commission memorandum on the promotion of fundamental labour standards and more social orientation of politics in the context of the opinion underlying globalisation, namely that the social factor must be strengthened, if a new equilibrium and a balanced distribution of the benefits of globalisation are to be achieved; the comparative advantages of the developing countries must not be jeopardised by the promotion of fundamental labour rights; measures: positive incentives, but no sanctions;
- Support the activities of the Commission in “*sustainability impact assessments*” with regard to WTO negotiations.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour

Project Initiative “Trans Fair”

The quality label initiative Trans Fair sets a signal for fair trade: The Fair Trade System guarantees fair prices to producers from the developing countries, as well as the establishment of long-term trade relationships through direct access to markets in Europe. With prices that are clearly higher than the world market level, and with additional premiums for conversion to organic agriculture and for social projects, the small farmers are in a position to improve their life situation in a sustainable and self-responsible manner. Moreover, with traditional and natural farming methods they make a major contribution towards preserving natural resources. Fairly traded products (supported for many years by Development Cooperation and “Weltladen” shops) such as coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, orange juice or bananas meanwhile bear the Trans Fair quality label “Fair Trade Certified”. These products are subject to stringent criteria, compliance with which is monitored consistently. The quality label guarantees consumers the fair enjoyment of high-quality products from natural farming that are produced in a socially and ecologically impeccable manner.

The quality and benefit of the Fair Trade products is also to the fore in an information campaign that aims at convincing the Austrians of the offers with classical advertising, sales promotion measures and regional action weeks over the next three years. Many ministries, provincial authorities, communities and chambers already enjoy fairly traded coffee or orange juice, and are thus a model for responsible consumer behaviour.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs; project carrier: Trans Fair

Support for Rural Development in Morocco

In cooperation with the non-governmental organisation Targa and the University of Rabat, a regional development programme has been implemented in the valley of Ouneine in the southern part of the Atlas Mountains for more than 10 years. Some 65 villages with about 8000 inhabitants benefit from the project activities. Education and training creates local know-how that will allow independent continuation of the measures. Successful examples of this are the use of hydroelectricity and solar energy for power supply, and an improved drinking water supply. A coordinated system of tariffs guarantees sparing use of water and revenues for repair and maintenance work. Local institutions and associations are trained in organisational development, and at the communal level the responsible people were supported in the establishment of an accounting system and in planning work. In the last 3 years, drinking water plants have been installed in 12 villages, waste water systems in another 6 villages, and one village has been connected to the electricity network. Further activities included supportive measures in animal husbandry, the establishment of a weaving group, and the initiation of an alphabetisation programme. This project is a model example of how self-supporting development processes can be promoted by support for local initiatives over a number of years, allowing the donor to withdraw from the partnership without any problems.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs; project partners in Morocco: Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, Université de Rabat

The “Water Managers” in Kenya

In Kenya, like in many other developing countries, fetching water is the women’s task. Therefore, only women have management positions in the water supply and hygiene projects of the non-governmental “Kenya Water for Health Organisation” (KWAHO). KWAHO – a successful partner of Austrian Development Cooperation for more than 10 years – provides the entire staff for the planning and implementation of water projects, and works mainly in regions beyond the reach of national supply. KWAHO mobilises the communities by integrating the population in all activities and decisions, thus building awareness and acceptance. As soon as the individual community reports the need for a water supply or hygiene project, the women’s groups as the future operators receive training in management, maintenance and operation from experts. Then the technical infrastructure is installed jointly. A strong awareness of self-responsibility is created not only by the official transfer of ownership in the water management facility to the community, but also by the specific project handling procedure. In order to guarantee sustainability of the organisational, financial and technical functions, the operations are accompanied and cooperation in regional associations is supported for some time after the handover. The water cooperatives are registered with the Social Ministry in accordance with Kenyan law, and they collect a socially graded water price for their services.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs; project carrier in Kenya: Kenya Water for Health Organisation (KWAHO)

Nepal: Support Measures for Sustainable Development at the Roof of the World

Sustainable development as a future perspective also applies to the Austrian projects in Nepal. They are all based on an approach that integrates ecological, economic, social and cultural factors in order to allow the people in the Himalayan region to live a better life in the long run.

Some examples:

- The small hydroelectric power plant in the Mount Everest region reduces the workload of women and the consumption of firewood. Electricity encouraged the Sherpas to start up enterprises, which in turn led to a number of new jobs.
- The farming project in the Makalu-Barun National Park aims to develop a new economic basis together with the hill farmers. Local products are manufactured in cooperatives, traditional cultivation of fields is modernised, the biodiversity of forests can be protected.
- Ecological tourism offers an additional source of income in the region bordering on Tibet, from which all the inhabitants benefit. Women receive a qualified training in tourism occupations.

- World Cultural Heritage Kathmandu – the restoration of old palaces and parks preserves the unique architecture, and their use as museums or for gastronomy allows them to be maintained in the long term.

Intensive cooperation with the village communities, the promotion of women, and comprehensive education programmes should allow the native population to take responsibility for the development of their village, their region and their country.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with various partner organisations in Nepal

OECD Initiative “Environmentally Sustainable Transport” (EST)

As a contribution towards sustainable development, the OECD has initiated the international project “Environmentally Sustainable Transport”, in which several countries including Austria are actively involved. The core of the project is the definition of an environmentally sustainable transport system (EST) based on environmental and health quality targets and the operative objectives derived from these on the one hand, and the development of long-term scenarios and the identification of instruments and strategies that will lead to the achievement of the set targets on the other hand. For the first time, a desirable future vision of transport in the year 2030 will be outlined, which will be described by criteria and long-term strategic goals such as climate protection, air quality, noise and space consumption. Within the scope of the OECD project, which consists of 4 phases, nine countries will conduct case studies. Austria, through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, was involved in three case studies (e.g. together with France, Italy and Switzerland in the project “Environmentally Sustainable Transport in the Alps Region”). The OECD EST projects show that environmentally sustainable transport is achievable in the long term (by 2030), if an overall strategy with a combination of synergy measures (low-emission vehicles and alternative drive technologies, making environmentally friendly modes of transport more attractive, mobility management with intelligent mobility services and intermodal transport logistics) is implemented. This strategy must be supplemented by the establishment of fair conditions on the market and economic incentives for a sustainable mobility and economy, by regional planning, location policy and settlement development that prevent uncontrolled urban spread and promote a mix of uses, and by an offensive in the field of awareness building, information and public relations work, as well as by model projects and pilot projects, research and education. Austria will continue to play an active leading role in the further implementation of the EST Guidelines, with particular focus on:

- Supporting regional follow-up activities, especially in the Alps region, as a contribution towards implementation of the transport protocol of the Alpine Convention;
- OECD/ UNEP / CEI Initiative EST goes East (this initiative to expand EST, started with Austria’s support, aims at supporting an environmentally sustainable transport development in the neighbouring countries of Central and Eastern Europe; a pilot study

on the current and future situation with regard to the environmental impact of transport in the CEI countries has already been completed);

- External costs of transport in the countries of the Central European Initiative;
- Establishment of and support for a clearing house for EST.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

Initiatives For European Withdrawal from Nuclear Power

Austria is aware that the withdrawal from nuclear power in Europe is a long-term project. Therefore, the motto of Austrian nuclear power policy is to play the role of a “pacemaker” on the road to an energy supply without nuclear power. Against this backdrop, the Austrian nuclear energy policy comprises three strategic elements:

The risk-related dimension:

Activities to reduce the hazard potential of nuclear power plants close to the borders, whereby the meaning of the term “close to the borders” has shifted dramatically since the Chernobyl disaster.

The energy management dimension:

Cooperation and support in the field of energy management for the reform states in Central and Eastern Europe as a contribution towards meeting the requirements for a withdrawal from the use of nuclear power in these countries.

The legal dimension:

Further development and improvement of international law to protect the interests of the Austrian population and to protect the environment. This dimension also includes the further development of Austrian legislation and Austrian initiatives for European safety standards and a fundamental reform of the EURATOM treaty.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Federal Chancellery, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Initiatives to Promote Sustainability-relevant “Joint Research”

On the part of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, a number of concrete initiatives to promote sustainability-relevant international “joint research” through the establishment of international networks and “joint funding” (e.g. within the scope of the European Research Area, the 6th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, bilateral cooperation, UN science initiatives) are being implemented. Thereby, the following initiatives at EU level will have special priority:

- Cooperation between member states and the European Commission in the research sector (in accordance with Art. 169 of the Treaty of Amsterdam);
- Support for national researchers in connection with the establishment of “networks of excellence”;
- Opening up of programmes.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

Pilot Project Austria/Hungary: “Transport in Sensitive Regions, Based on the Region Neusiedler See/Fertő-tó”

The Vienna UNECE Declaration on Transport and Environment (Vienna 1997) has declared “sensitive areas” to be a responsibility of sustainable transport development. In these areas, special attention should be paid to the preservation of and compliance with acceptable limits for transport-related health and environmental impacts. Austria is a lead country for implementation of Chapter IV of the Declaration.

Based on the extensive fundamental research work conducted by Austria (catalogue of criteria, pilot study, conference), a letter of intent for a mutual pilot project on sustainable transport in the sensitive Austro-Hungarian region Neusiedler See/Fertő-tó was signed by the Austrian and the Hungarian Environment Ministers in 2001. This pilot project is a significant mutual contribution not only towards implementation of the UNECE Vienna Declaration, but also in terms of early EU integration of Hungary. The region around the lake Neusiedler See was selected for this pilot study because it is one of the most important landscape regions in Europe. The ecological and cultural values, and the instable utilisation and ecosystem make this region a sensitive area with exceptional opportunities for a sustainable lifestyle and management – in the midst of a dynamic economic area and against the backdrop of increasing east-west and north-south traffic.

The following key projects are planned, among others:

- Innovative public transport
- Cross-border mobility centre
- Soft mobility for soft tourism

The pilot project should have an exemplary nature and be a model for how transport problems can be solved in sensitive areas and future opportunities for an environmentally sustainable development of transport can be opened up and exploited in general and within the region itself.

Responsible for implementation: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, in cooperation with the province Burgenland and the Republic of Hungary

Innovative Examples Setting Impulses, Creating Models, Stimulating Imitation

Many areas of the public sector and business in Austria have taken sustainable development seriously and implemented it in concrete activities in compliance with the principle “think globally – act locally” ever since the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. A great number of implementation projects that comply with the key objectives and starting points for the 4 fields of action in the Strategy for a Sustainable Austria are already under way.

In many cases, the **model initiatives presented** in the following are due to the commitment and dedication of individuals or small groups. The aim of this Strategy is to provide or modify the framework conditions necessary for the implementation of such projects and initiatives, and to improve the possibilities for more commitment in the implementation of the concept of sustainable development and support for the achievement of these key objectives in the future. The projects are intended to stimulate “imitation”, and to provide impulses for many more such innovative examples.

FIELD OF ACTION “QUALITY OF LIFE IN AUSTRIA”

INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS ON THE COMPATIBILITY OF WORK AND FAMILY

The **audit “Family and Career”** is a sophisticated instrument that motivates and supports businesses in taking family-friendly measures. It helps the companies to audit their family-friendliness with a comprehensive catalogue of criteria, to evaluate the results of measures, and to improve their family-friendliness. The criteria include flexible working hours and qualified part-time work, qualification of management employees in family-friendly management skills, family-oriented further education measures, support in returning to work after having a child, possibilities of job sharing, parental leave options at the corporate level, corporate nursery schools or other support in family functions. The effects of family-friendly measures are manifold: Better motivation, higher performance and commitment to the company, less stress burden, reduction in cost-intensive employee fluctuation, lower absence rates, and improved corporate image in the eyes of the public and of customers or clients. In its pilot phase, the family audit was supported by public funding.

The objective of the project **“Prepared Parents”** by the Austrian Chamber of Commerce is gender equality. Thereby, the family obligations of men and women must also be taken into account. Work interruptions due to parental leave frequently result in disintegration from the labour market. The project “Prepared Parents” aims to counteract this. The proposed concept of preventive training workshops supports young mothers in returning to their jobs or in looking for a new job with assurance and self-confidence. The Austrian Chamber of Commerce is also involved in the pilot project **Ticket Junior**. The employer purchases childcare vouchers for his employees, which can be redeemed from a partner network of childcare facilities. This network is being enlarged continuously. The aim is to make compatibility of work and family easier for working parents. The Austrian Chamber of Commerce offers such vouchers for all parents with children under the age of 14.

CITIZEN BUREAUS FOR YOUNG AND OLD

This initiative was started by the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations in 1998 with the concept of “active aging and consolidation of solidarity between the generations as a goal of generation policy”. It offers older people an opportunity to continue using their talents, skills and knowledge for others even after retirement, and to remain vital. This should show how important people who have retired from work still are for the community – and that their place is in the midst of society. With support from the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, 30 Citizen Bureaus for Young and Old have already been established in Austria, providing free services and assistance in the field of community work for the younger generation.

PRIVATE BANKRUPTCY PROCEDURE

The judicial debt regulation procedure (“private bankruptcy”) was introduced in Austria with the 1993 Amendment to the Bankruptcy Code. The regulations became effective on January 1, 1995, and the objective is to offer insolvent debtors an efficient way to deal with their debts. Thus, private individuals who are in debt can be shown a way out of the spiral of interest and costs, allowing them to make a clean start.

The main difference between the debt regulation procedure and corporate bankruptcy procedure lies in the fact that on the one hand proceedings can be initiated even if the assets will be exhausted by costs or without depositing a cost advance under certain circumstances, and in the regulations concerning payment schedule and absorption procedures on the other hand. Based on a payment schedule, the debtor is released from the remainder of his debt once a certain amount has been paid, provided such a solution is approved by the majority of creditors, whereby there is no fixed minimum quota in contrast to compulsory settlement. Exemption from residual debt – within the scope of the absorption procedure – is also possible against the creditors’ will, if the debtor is honest, cedes his entire income over and beyond the subsistence level to a trustee, and is able to cover at least 10% of the proved debt within seven years, or if equity reasons apply. This new regulation prevents social exclusion and a permanent slide into poverty for many private debtors.

THE EDUCATION VOUCHER – A NATIONWIDE ACTION BY ALL CHAMBERS OF LABOUR TO PROMOTE FURTHER EDUCATION

The Chamber of Labour education vouchers worth € 100 can be ordered from the Chambers of Labour as of 2002, and then redeemed for personal further education within the scope of a wide range of courses, e.g. in information technology. In the next four years, the Chambers of Labour will invest a total of about 73 million euros in additional services for their members. The Chamber of Labour education voucher is a concrete measure to facilitate access to further education for its members, and to make it affordable. This takes the fact into consideration that it is becoming increasingly difficult for employees to orient themselves on the rapidly growing further education market. The prices for information technology courses, for example, have tripled within a period of only 10 years – and without support, many employees can no longer afford further education and thus better career opportunities. The further education package for parents on parental leave provides a special education offensive: An education bonus of € 50, i.e. a total of € 150.00 is available to young parents on parental leave for further education. In addition, free childcare is offered during the courses.

SUSTAINABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

The objective of the “**Regional Employment Pact Graz and Graz-Neighbourhood**” is to integrate the topic of “sustainability” as a general matter in the Pact strategy. All the future projects of the Regional Employment Pact Graz and Graz-Neighbourhood should take the targets of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy into account at the levels of project development, implementation and evaluation. The initiative for the project “Integration of Sustainability Criteria in the Projects of the Regional Employment Pact” came from the consulting firm eco4ward in Graz. The project group includes experts from the fields of environment, social affairs and business, thus covering the core areas of sustainable development. It supports the steering group of the Employment Pact in the development of proposals for sustainability goals and indicators for the strategic fields of the Pact on the one hand, and on the other hand it supports the project managers of the Pact projects in the development of project-specific sustainability criteria and indicators for periodical (internal) monitoring of the actors. In concrete, this means that in the development of a project for creating jobs in landscape conservation, for example, not only the ecological but also the social and economic impacts and the synergy effects must be taken into account. This should result in the integration of different perspectives and in a comprehensive view. eco4ward as a “network node” between the processes (projects) in the Pact region, the provincial strategy and the federal strategy, plans to take the relevant services of the projects out and to network them with other regional and national activities, and to integrate numerous experts in order to guarantee the technical quality of the work and supraregional integration.

FLEXPOWER: A RESEARCH AND CONSULTING PROJECT FOR FREE EMPLOYEES AND NEW SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS

FlexPower was started in 2001 as a joint research and consulting project of the Austrian Chamber of Labour, the Austrian Trade Union Federation, the Trade Union of Private Employees and other labour organisations for the target group of free employees and new self-employed persons. More and more employment contracts are deviating from the traditional standard employment contract. These new forms are referred to as “atypical employment contracts”. Free employees undertake to provide their work for a definite or indefinite period of time. They are not subject to instruction, and they can allocate their time freely. The equipment is usually provided by the employer. New self-employed persons are employed on the basis of job contracts. They undertake to provide a certain result, regardless of whether they do it themselves or employ a third party. Neither the free employees nor the new self-employed persons have any legal representation of interests. Currently, their number is about 50,000 and rising. The number of new self-employed persons, for example, rose by 40% within one year. The aims of the project are:

- Specific information, consulting and advice for these two target groups;
- Research in the fields of framework conditions of employment, problems such as working hours, working conditions and organisation, inadequate social security, being able to

deal with a fluctuating income, illness, holidays, corporate integration, demands for representation of interests, etc.;

- Fundamental work in establishing legal and organisational policy reform proposals.

INITIATIVES ON “PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE”

In the year 2002, universities, technical colleges, schools, scientific associations and companies will again present themselves and their scientific findings in a generally understandable and often humorous way in department stores, banks, stations, public squares, etc. throughout Austria within the scope of **ScienceWeek Austria**. ScienceWeek is supported by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology. In its own initiative, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology is calling on all research institutions to hold an open day within the scope of the annual **ScienceWeek**. The aim is to build a public understanding of science and technology (PUST) in Austria, based on the state of the art in research and technology.

Another innovative example is the platform “**Genetic Engineering and Us**”, which promotes **public understanding of science in the field of genetic engineering**. This is a project that will last several years and is aimed at informing the public – especially school children – about research and practical applications of genetic engineering. A homepage, press cuttings, exhibitions, lab courses and specific workshops, as well as other initiatives offer the population an opportunity to get information about this diversified subject.

EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In order to network the accompanying education activities in the sustainability process, and to support implementation of the concept of sustainable development, the Forum Environmental Education has established a **Round Table on “Education and Sustainable Development in Austria”** on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. This working group sees itself as a subgroup of the “Round Table Sustainable Austria” (see field of action “Austria as a Living Space”), to which it reports regularly. As an opinion-making, strategic consulting and supporting institution, the Education Round Table develops methods and programmes for implementation and promotion of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy in certain fields. A main focus is on the integration and networking of activities for sustainable development at universities. Planned measures are seminars, web databases with updated addresses, contacts and project collections, as well as an overview of sustainability lectures. In order to make the Local Agenda 21 more accessible and thus easier to use as a key instrument for the implementation of sustainable development, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, together with the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (project carrier: Forum Environmental Education in cooperation with various partners; for more information, visit www.umweltbildung.at) have started a number of initiatives. In addition to specific publications and their availability on the Internet, a comprehensive handbook describes the most important aspects of sustainable development for teachers and multipliers. Further modules are being added continuously. So far, information on the following subjects is available:

- **Module “Local Agenda 21”:** The necessary steps for implementation of sustainable development in the form of a Local Agenda 21 are presented clearly. A comprehensive service section offers numerous examples, addresses and links.
- **Module “Local Agenda 21 and Business”:** This module illustrates how Local Agendas can be implemented in cooperation with local businesses. In addition to the theoretical foundations, many concrete examples of successful integration of business in the Local Agenda 21 process are listed.
- **Module “Local Agenda 21 and Schools”:** Schools have a significant share in the successful implementation of a Local Agenda 21 process. This publication documents interesting examples, some of them from neighbouring countries, which offer schools the basis and guidelines for Local Agenda 21 processes.

STRATEGIC FOCUS PROGRAMME “AUSTRIA – WELLBEING DESTINATION OF EUROPE”

The “Strategic Focus Programme” of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour is aimed at consolidating the international competitiveness of Austrian tourism. The programme is intended as a response to the internationalisation and globalisation process in tourism. The programme “Austria – Wellbeing Destination of Europe”, together with the Austrian competence and development centres, promotes the development of Austrian health tourism with the aim of establishing Austria as a top-ranking European health destination in the long run. The objective is to make health tourism in Austria a brand product with guaranteed quality on the international markets, based on provincial and regional initiatives and with the development of innovative products and services. Health tourism is to be interwoven with all the relevant fields of science, such as medicine, psychology, dietetics, for example, and in the long term it is to be acknowledged as a part of the health system with scientifically established benefit. With the mutual strategy, a coordinated profile for the individual regions with a sustainable originality can be established without their losing their regional independence. Above all, health tourism requires intact living spaces and natural resources: Therefore, the aspect of sustainable development has a particularly high value.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE/SMOKING

The Austrians are meanwhile well aware of the fact that smoking is one of the most significant factors with regard to lifestyle-related diseases – moreover, nicotine dependence has been recognised as a disease in the International Classification of Diseases. Lung cancer comes first among the consequences of smoking in people’s awareness. 80% of non-smokers and 90% of smokers know about the carcinogenic effect of smoking, and the majority of smokers surveyed are thinking about giving up.

These results are the reason for expanding the successful lifestyle campaign “Aware lives better” to include a further measure. With the positively worded campaign “Pro Non-smoking”, a new approach has been chosen to illustrate ways and means of implementing the existing knowledge and to offer assistance thereby.

THE GREEN TOQUE – THE HEALTH-CONSCIOUS RESTAURANT

At the initiative of the province of Styria and the non-profit organisation “Styrian Society for Health Protection”, the “Green Toque” is awarded to restaurants that excel in the area of “Austrian natural cooking”. Currently, 67 restaurants in six Provinces have received this Lucullian order of merit, which is awarded for a wide additional range of dishes prepared in accordance with the principles of natural cooking. The objective is to introduce this initiative throughout the country, whereby the independent provincial health organisations will soon have the possibility to act as awarding institutions in their own province.

PROJECTS “KARENZ PLUS” AND “KARENZ WORKS”

Returning to work after parental leave requires re-organisation of family life, as well as early planning and preparation of the future employment: Time and energy management, suitable childcare, personal career and further education plan, funding options, and issues of parental leave and social law are the key themes that have to be investigated in this context. The non-profit organisation for labour market policy measures for the successful (re-)integration of non-working women on the labour market, “*abz wien*” (Association to Promote the Employment, Education and Future of Women) supports women in the form of specific projects that are financed with funds from the Labour Market Service.

The **project “Karenz plus”** offers mothers on parental leave the opportunity to develop individual strategies for the compatibility of family and work through information, consulting, courses and working groups. The project addresses women with infants aged up to two years and aims to help them return to their former workplace or find a new job after their parental leave. The **project “Karenz works”** offers women looking after a child under the age of three and living in Vienna new opportunities to prepare for their return to work. Supported by consultants, women interested in education and training define their individual educational wishes in small groups that meet weekly. During these group meetings, free internal childcare is available. Women that already have a concrete idea of their educational needs for reintegration in the work world can develop their own personal education and reintegration plan with assistance.

Karenz works offers women with a completed education plan financial support in obtaining their qualifications from cooperating educational institutions, and initiates training courses designed specifically for women with small children and in accordance with the requirements of the labour market. If certain criteria are met, the financing of external childcare may also be granted during the training.

FIELD OF ACTION “AUSTRIA AS A DYNAMIC BUSINESS LOCATION”

INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ECO-DESIGN

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, together with the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology and the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, is organising the 6th Eco-design Competition in 2002. More and more companies are becoming aware of the opportunity to have a significant influence with regard to the environmental friendliness of products as early as in the product design phase. The discussion with regard to the development of intelligent products and services has become more intensive in the course of this competition in recent years, and has meanwhile expanded to include an idea competition for eco-intelligent solutions using new media, and to the submission of ideas, visions, strategies and utopian concepts. In 2001, the jury was able to select the 13 most innovative products and ideas from a total of 127 submissions.

The Austrian Chamber of Commerce is also starting numerous initiatives in the field of eco-design: With the help of participation in the Eco-design Competition, the establishment of a collection of examples of sustainable products, presentations at trade fairs and international programmes (PHARE), and with value analyses training courses, the market opportunities for sustainable, resource-efficient products are to be increased and companies supported in the development of sustainable products. Efficiency and resource-efficiency are also major elements within the scope of design consulting and design coaching – as supported by the Institute for Economic Development (WIFI). In the long term (until about 2050), improvements by a factor of X (X~ 10) are to be achieved. A value analysis project aims to integrate, test and document the specifications for a sustainable product, such as excellent quality, consideration of the customer benefit, resource-efficiency and service orientation – using the possibilities of expert systems in the classical method of product development with the help of value analysis or the new standard value management – and then to make these available to consultants and value analysts in the companies. For more information, visit www.ecodesign-beispiele.at/.

COMPETENCE CENTRE PROGRAMME K PLUS

Another instrument of technology policy that is important for the issues of sustainability is the competence centre programme **K plus**. It aims to consolidate and improve cooperation between science and business in Austria. This is to be achieved by conducting mutually defined and processed research programmes within the scope of jointly operated research centres. The main feature of K plus is the combination of competences from industry with those from the sciences in a long-term research partnership in which the partners contribute competences and benefit from the results of the cooperation equally. K plus was started as an initiative by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology in 1998, and in 2002 five new competence centres will be opened. Four of these five new centres are highly relevant for sustainable development:

- The Austrian Bioenergy Center (ABC) located in Graz will promote research in the field of alternative energy supply.
- The Polymer Competence Center (PCC) in Leoben will contribute towards increasing the functionality and lifetime of various products in the field of plastics development through material research and shortening of production paths.
- The Center of Competence for Tribology (ACT) in Vienna will research and promote a reduction in raw material consumption and environmental pollution through industrial processes, in addition to new materials to reduce symptoms of friction and wear.
- The Center of Natural Hazard Management (Alps) in Innsbruck will develop methods and strategies for sustainable preservation of the Alpine living space, and a platform for researching natural hazards is also to be established.

INDUSTRIAL COMPETENCE CENTRES AND NETWORKS K_{IND}/K_{NET}

Topics of relevance for sustainable development are also taken into consideration in the programme to promote industrial competence centres and networks (K_{ind} and K_{net}) of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour. This support programme initiated in the year 1998 aims to establish and consolidate industrial technology clusters and sustainable increase in private R&D expenditures by supporting multi-year research programmes in which the knowledge and resources of industry and science are bundled. With regard to sustainability, the following competence centres and networks are worth mention:

- The competence network “Energy from Biomass” (RENET Austria) serves the purpose of research and demonstration in the gasification of solid biomass to produce heat and electricity.
- The competence network Timber and the competence centre Wood Technology serve to network and bundle know-how in timber research, from the production of raw materials to processing and use in the areas timber construction, timber materials, interior design/furniture, surfaces and fibres.
- The “Competence Centre for Electronics Recycling and Sustainable Product Development” (KERP) is a research centre for sustainable solutions in the electric and electronics industry.

MAKING THE NATIONAL ACCOUNTS (BLUE BOOK) MORE ECOLOGICAL

The initiative to prepare the **Ecological Blue Book**, in which individual “satellite accounts” that are essential for illustrating the connections between economy and environment (such as environmental protection accounts, eco-taxes, eco-industries, natural assets, etc.) are included in the national accounts, originated with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, and is now being continued by Statistik Austria and the Federal Environmental Agency. By linking individual elements of the national accounts (material flow accounts, NAMEA, environmental protection accounts, energy statistics), more comprehensive statements on the correlation between economic growth and the resulting environmental impacts should be possible. The **material flow analysis**, a central element of the Ecological Blue Book, allows the material input and output of various socio-economic systems (national economies, regions, towns, etc.) to be recorded. Austria is one of the leading nations in the world in this respect, both with regard to conception and also with regard to implementation in the official statistics. The material throughput in Austria is shown for major flows such as water, air, minerals, biomass and fossil fuels. The results show how much material consumption is associated with specific economic activities. This allows the establishment of expressive indicators for the resource efficiency of a society, and it makes the success of measures or the need for action visible. Another element of the Ecological Blue Book, NAMEA (National Accounting Matrix including Environmental Accounts) links physical emissions (air, water, waste) from the individual areas of the economy with their economic data (production, value added, employment). The data from NAMEA-Air are useful to define targets for the individual industries within the scope of an EU Emission Trading System.

ECO-PROFIT AND PREPARE PROGRAMME

The ECO-PROFIT Programme developed in Graz has spread successfully all over the world: In more than 50 communities and regions from ten countries, some 1000 companies have meanwhile participated in the ECO-PROFIT workshops, performed energy and material flow analyses, and implemented a number of highly profitable environmental measures voluntarily. Through active participation of the administration and sciences, new networks have been initiated and positive image effects achieved for the companies. In the EcoBusinessPlan Vienna, the concept was integrated in a comprehensive programme with additional focuses on tourism, climate protection, increased energy efficiency, and the establishment of environmental management systems. Accompanying evaluations have confirmed the effectiveness and efficiency of these consulting and information programmes, and have shown that voluntary corporate environmental protection soon pays off. This Austrian know-how export has meanwhile become an attractive gateway to the issue of environmental management for small and medium-sized companies all over the world. Within the scope of the PREPARE programmes, the concept of waste reduction is investigated and actively implemented in selected companies from as many industries as possible. Operational reorganisation aimed at a more sparing use of materials and energy resources results in a competitive edge.

INNOVATIVE CONTRACTING INITIATIVES

To improve the energy efficiency of federal buildings, the federal government adopted the **“Impulse Programme Contracting for Federal Buildings”** in 2001. In a joint initiative by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, and the Federal Real Estate Company, the energy supply for federal buildings is to be reduced significantly through a contracting programme between 2002 and 2004. In the medium term, this cost-efficient instrument is to be expanded to include communal and private service buildings as well.

In **“Wood Energy Contracting Projects”**, blocks of flats, community centres and small housing estates are supplied with comfortable, crisis-proof heat from domestic forests. Thereby, the farmers act as contractors that sell the finished service “heat” and not “only” the raw materials. So far, 63 heat supply contracts and micro-networks with a total output of 6500 kW have been realised under the leadership of Regionalenergie Steiermark and with support from the province of Styria and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY POLICY AT THE COMMUNAL LEVEL

The **“e5 Programme for Energy-efficient Communities”**, which was initiated by the Energy Institute Vorarlberg in 1998 and has meanwhile spread to the Tyrol and Salzburg, is a comprehensive, tried and tested instrument for implementing a sustainable communal energy policy. The aim of the programme is to start off and support a development process that allows all the powers in the community to make their contribution towards climate protection. Based on a scoring system for implemented measures, the community’s “energy policy profile” is determined and the quality label with 5 levels (e, ee, eee, eeee and eeeee) is awarded. The more e’s the better. For the communities, “e5” means not only cost savings in the communal budget, but also an image gain.

A multitude of Austrian communities are taking exemplary initiatives to promote renewable sources of energy. Starting out from an analysis of the status quo and a concept of measures based on this analysis (e.g. within the scope of an energy concept or an “e5 programme”), various programmes have been and are being initiated and projects realised in order to use renewable energy sources for the provision of heat, electricity and fuels:

- Biomass heating plants
- Biomass plants for public and private buildings
- Programmes for solar heating plants
- Power generation from biogas, biomass, geothermics, wind, small hydroelectric power plants and photovoltaics
- Eco-power for public buildings
- Production of biodiesel

The following communities are listed here as representative examples: Bruck a.d. Leitha, Eberschwang, Güssing, Kautzen, Langenegg, Lienz, Schwaz and Zwischenwasser.

INITIATIVES TO MAKE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MORE ECOLOGICAL

One instrument to promote sustainable production and services is making the public procurement system more ecological. As early as 1998, the Austrian federal government adopted relevant guidelines for the public administration.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, together with two other ministries and five provincial governments, initiated the project **“Check it! Criteria for Consideration of Environmental Protection in Public Procurement and Contracting”**, which is supported by the EU LIFE programme. The aim is to provide ecological information about individual products, services and systems. The result is a comprehensive and compact list of available criteria and assessments for major product areas, which could be used directly in invitations for tenders. This catalogue should offer the procuring agencies assistance in the integration of ecological aspects in invitations for tender. “Check it!” is available both in printed form and on the Internet at www.oekoeinkauf.at.

Since the City of Vienna (including the hospitals and Wiener Stadtwerke) purchase products and services worth approx. 5.5 million euros each year, there is a clear need to make the municipal procurement system more ecological. For this purpose, the project **“EcoPurchasing Vienna”** was initiated in 1998 and the following objective was defined: More ecological procurement by the municipal authorities and by Wiener Stadtwerke (Vienna Municipal Works), thus supporting the market introduction and diffusion of environmentally friendly products. The instrument for “EcoPurchasing Vienna” is the catalogue of criteria that lists ecological recommendations for the planning and contracting of services for all purchasing agencies. These catalogues of criteria provide legally secured text modules for the tender invitations. Another function of EcoPurchasing Vienna is the concrete implementation of these criteria. This is achieved with the initiation and implementation of pilot projects on the one hand, and by building acceptance and awareness on the other hand. The criteria are, inter alia, little packaging, phosphate- and formaldehyde-free products, no chlorine bleach, no tropical timbers. Meanwhile, 16 working groups are working on the catalogues of criteria for the areas lighting, disinfection, printed matter, electrical office and household appliances, fleet, domestic engineering, building construction, interior design, food, planning, civil engineering, events, prevention, detergents and cleaning agents, water, and winter services. The catalogues of criteria or the individual criteria basically include the ecological aspects, tuned to the specific technical and qualitative requirements that certain products and services have to meet. Factors like economy, quality requirements and suitability for use are also taken into consideration, of course.

THE ECO-EFFICIENCY EXCHANGE: VIRTUAL MARKETPLACE FOR BUYERS AND SELLERS

The Eco-efficiency Exchange is a purchasing platform for eco-efficient or sustainable products and services on the Internet. The aim of this innovative project is to bring together the buyers and sellers of such products and services, in order to support the market for sustainability. A major element is the communication of eco-efficient offers in an Internet portal. Buyers and purchasers describe their purchasing requests, and manufacturers or service providers can use the exchange to present their products with a view to eco-efficiency criteria, and to compete with each other. The project "Eco-efficiency Exchange" is being implemented by the association Faktor 4+ Klagenfurt with support from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, the province of Carinthia, the city of Klagenfurt, and the city of Vienna. For more information, visit www.faktor4plus.at.

ECO-LABEL FOR BUSINESSES IN TOURISM

The Austrian eco-label for businesses in tourism distinguishes hotels and restaurants that are committed to environmentally friendly management and social responsibility. It is regarded as a quality label throughout the country, and it stands for quality and environmental awareness in the tourism and leisure industry. Since 1996, 186 businesses with 14,800 beds have been awarded the label. In order to obtain the label, the companies must meet a number of criteria that range from purchasing to waste prevention, from water consumption to energy management, and from architecture and construction to traffic and noise prevention. Independent experts audit the businesses and guarantee that only those businesses that take their ecological responsibility seriously are awarded the label.

CORPORATE MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

The successful completion of the model project "Soft Mobility Partnership – Corporate Mobility Management" initiated by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Austrian Chamber of Commerce at the pilot operations AVL List, Tulln Provincial Hospital, Medienhaus Vorarlberg, Federal Environmental Agency, and the ministry itself, shows markedly reduced CO₂ emissions and advantages for the operations. Some "highlights" from the results of the model project are:

- Lower share of passenger cars used to get to work (up to 15% reduction in car drivers) and increased share of public transport and bicycles;
- Marked reduction in CO₂ emissions from corporate traffic in all operations (up to –30% at the Federal Environmental Agency, –21% CO₂ reduction in the total traffic at Tulln Provincial Hospital, and up to –17% CO₂ reduction in getting to work at Medienhaus Vorarlberg);
- Contribution towards rationalisation of transport, and financial benefits for the company;
- Image gain for the model operations, high acceptance and positive assessment of the measures on the part of the model operations and their employees.

At the ministry itself, the already high share of public transport users among the employees was increased to about 88% (e.g. Stubenbastei location), and the CO₂ emissions were reduced even

further by 3%. Covered cycle stands were installed, service cycles and electric scooters were purchased, cycle track improvements and structural road safety measures were achieved in cooperation with the first district of Vienna, the public transport timetable information on the Internet was expanded, and “mobility days” were organised.

AUSTRIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

With the foundation of the Austrian Business Council for Sustainable Development (ABCSD) in July 1997, a platform for sustainable economic growth was set up for the business world. ABCSD (www.abcspd.at) is a cooperation between currently 65 leading representatives from Austrian business. For the members, the compatibility of market economy concepts and the principles of comprehensive environmental protection are important issues. The main objective of this business club is to offer corporate executives in Austria assistance in integration of the vision of “sustainable development” with their corporate philosophy, and to help a business style oriented towards sustainable development achieve a breakthrough. The basic idea behind the focus on this small niche is the conviction that successful realisation in a company is only realistic if the corporate management can identify fully with these concepts. The current focus of work (eco-efficiency; the role of the financial markets; climate and energy; sustainability in consumption) is designed to take the principle of sustainable development into consideration on the one hand, and on the other hand to guarantee implementation under economic framework conditions. The focuses for the next two years are:

- To illustrate the corporate benefit of a sustainable economy with examples of best practice;
- Opportunities and risks of the Emission Trading System;
- Climate protection strategy and its consequences for business.

BROAD IMPACT AND IMPULSES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

In the year 2001, a start-up initiative and business plan competition on the subject of “sustainable management” was conducted for the first time in Austria in cooperation between the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology and UNIUN (a project that illustrates self-employment as an attractive alternative to the conventional career paths of university graduates). For this purpose, a specially designed qualification programme was offered to support scientists and researchers in the implementation of their knowledge and ideas to start up a business. An individual business plan was developed step by step, and in a concluding business plan competition the best start-up concepts were awarded prizes. This first start-up initiative in this area clearly shows that the principles of sustainable development allow entirely new lines of business with sustainable products and solutions to be opened up. Within the scope of the programme line “house of the future” from the impulse programme “Sustainable Management” by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, two competitions were organised for demonstration projects that have already been realised in the area of new construction and old buildings. Thereby, the most innovative, most energy-efficient, architecturally most appealing, most cost effective buildings constructed using ecological building materials were selected and their architects or builder-owners were awarded prizes. Such model buildings should illustrate the best practice in this area for other architects or builder-owners. Within the scope of the programme line “factory of the future”, a competition on the subject of renewable raw materials is planned for 2002.

INFORMATION OFFENSIVE IN THE AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Austrian companies have internationally renowned expertise in the areas of environmental technology and environmental management. With the project jointly initiated by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management in 1997, www.umwelttechnik.at, Austrian products, processes and system solutions are available worldwide. The aim is to provide easier access for the general public to get current information about initiatives in the area of environmental technology. Companies have the opportunity to present their services and developments to a broad international consumer public, and to contribute towards securing the business location Austria. The services of the Austrian businesses in the area of environmental management are presented at www.umweltmanagement.at.

FIELD OF ACTION “AUSTRIA AS A LIVING SPACE”

ACTOR NETWORK “SUSTAINABLE AUSTRIA”

The actor network “Sustainable Austria” was established at the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management in 1998. It meanwhile has some 130 members working directly on the implementation of sustainable development. They represent both different levels (communities, regions, Provinces and federal level) and different sectors. As the heart of the “human infrastructure”, the actor network should support the establishment of a policy of sustainability in Austria, and coordinate or accelerate its implementation. The project is currently supported by 4 ministries and 7 Provinces, with technical and organisational assistance from the Austrian Institute for Sustainable Development. It serves the personal exchange of experience between members of the network, and definition of the next mutual implementation steps. A quarterly newsletter informs about the progress made. For more information, visit www.nachhaltigkeit.at.

“BEST PRACTICE” AND COMMUNICATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The database “**NachhaltigkeitsTATENbank**” initiated by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (www.municipa.at/taten) contains more than 100 exemplary sustainable development projects. It illustrates how deeds for the environment, economy and human beings can be implemented in integrated overall concepts, and presents local, communal, regional, national and transnational case examples from Austria. It serves to network initiatives that already exist, and to collect ideas for committed groups and individuals. With scientific analyses, the success factors and inhibitors in the transfer of project ideas are determined and the requirements for preparing innovative project concepts more efficiently are investigated.

The Internet portal for sustainable development at www.nachhaltigkeit.at is an active hub for information, communication and motivation for the implementation of sustainable development in Austria, and for information about international developments. The portal is supported jointly by the Austrian Institute for Sustainable Development, the research focus Sustainability and Environmental Management, Vienna University of Economic Sciences, and the Sustainable Europe Research Institute Vienna on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, with the objective of pooling available information and thus providing a central point for all actors committed to sustainable development in Austria. Information on various topics that is updated weekly and presented in a transparent manner offers starting points for actors in the communities and regions, individuals in politics and administration, decision-makers in business, multipliers and interested individuals. Topics like sustainable lifestyle, sustainable management, etc. are processed as monthly topics with relevant reports and interviews, and presented in depth. A calendar of events that is updated weekly offers information about events from small workshops to major international conferences. Particularly interesting initiatives are presented as the “Project of the Week”.

PROMOTION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRIA

The integrative promotion concept for rural development offers significant impulses for all three pillars of sustainable development:

- The remuneration of environmental services (within the scope of the Agricultural Environment Programme, the “Austrian Programme to Promote an Environmentally Friendly, Extensive Agriculture that Protects Natural Living Space”, **OPÜL** in short) comprises some 59% of public funds appropriated for rural development (about 7.1 billion euros between 2000 and 2006), whereby all environmental media profit from the protective measures: soil, water, air, landscape and biodiversity. More than 90% of agricultural surfaces are managed under the condition that existing landscape elements must be preserved, on more than 500,000 hectares only process materials permitted in biological management are used, some 17,000 domestic animals of endangered species are bred by 3,700 farms in order to preserve the genetic resources. Alpine grassland and grassland on steep mountain slopes is preserved through mowing and seasonal alpine pasture management. With stabilised rotation of crops, 68,000 farms help to prevent erosion and nutrients being flushed out. In addition, the promotion of neighbouring areas (26% of public funds), investments, adjustment and development of rural areas, forestry management measures, processing and marketing, and vocational training has positive impacts on the environment.
- Strengthening of **agricultural businesses** makes a significant contribution towards economic security for the entire rural region by preserving the structure (important supply facilities, doctors, educational facilities do not move away), and creating or preserving jobs (agriculture is a major employer in the region). A rough estimate shows that investment support of 100,000 euros during the construction phase can create or secure 1 to 1.5 jobs.
- The social impacts are strongly interrelated with the economic situation and the structure in rural areas: More jobs allow more people to stay in the region with a socially acceptable income, and the structure thus secured is followed by good supply with the most important services.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT THE REGIONAL AND COMMUNAL LEVEL

Austria can refer to a wide range of innovative projects for sustainable development at the regional and communal level. In the following, a few innovative examples are described as representative of the multitude of dedicated activities: The active role of the province of Styria in the implementation of sustainable development is demonstrated impressively by the success story of “Ökologische Landentwicklung Steiermark” (Ecological Land Development Styria), which has meanwhile become a Styrian institution. The objective is to advise and support the communities in preparing concrete future scenarios and development programmes in accordance with Agenda 21. In recent years, 100 Styrian communities have already been advised by Ökologische Landentwicklung Steiermark, including 36 Local Agenda 21 pilot communities that receive scientific-technical support. Within the scope of the Regional Agenda 21 for the district of Kirchdorf/Krems in Upper Austria, a concept for sustainable development was developed, existing individual initiatives and projects were networked, and new topics important for the future of the district were treated (e.g. telecommunication, renewable raw materials, timber innovation, regional energy supply, etc.). Thus, a mutual orientation perspective for a “model region for sustainable management and action” can be developed as a guide and management instrument for the district, and implementation processes (idea competition, future workshops, innovation workshops, best practice folder) can be initiated. The community of Steinbach a. d. Steyr has been exceptionally successful in overcoming a major structural crisis by implementing its ecologically, economically and socially oriented concept. This “Steinbacher method” was documented in an exemplary manner in brochures and guidelines, and has since then served as an impulse for many other Austrian communities. Another example of a Local Agenda 21 with focus on sustainable transport and mobility management is the project of the low-traffic community Langenlois, initiated by the province of Lower Austria. The objective is to motivate other communities to implement the idea of a “low-traffic community”.

The implementation of Local Agenda 21 is supported in many ways by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management: inter alia, the guideline “Lebensträume Aktionsräume – LA 1” (Life Dreams Action Spaces – LA 21) was published and a competition for implementation of Local Agenda 21 processes was organised. The 10 most innovative projects are now being implemented with financial support from the ministry.

THE CLIMATE PROTECTION PROGRAMME KLIP VIENNA

KliP Vienna is the most modern and most innovative climate protection programme of any capital city in Europe. KliP, which was developed with the help of more than 300 employees from the municipal council, politics, business, the Vienna Environmental Ombudsman, and municipal companies (e.g. Stadtwerke, Vienna Transport, Hospitals Association), was adopted by the Vienna City Council in 1999. The implementation of 36 programmes in five fields of action (district heating and power generation, housing, businesses, city administration, and mobility) is to achieve the following reductions in CO₂ emissions and other greenhouse gases by the year 2010:

- Minus 26 percent in CO₂ emissions with reference to the currently forecast level for the year 2010;
- Minus 22 percent in CO₂ emissions per inhabitant and year (reference value 1987/Climate Alliance);
- Minus 15 percent in CO₂ emissions with reference to the level for 1990 (base level Kyoto);
- *Additionally, minus 1.3 million tons of CO₂ equivalents.*

Every programme of measures comprises concrete objectives, such as the contribution towards reducing CO₂ emissions, and individual measures for reaching the targets. In addition, the establishment, improvement and modification of framework conditions and structures are stimulated in order to be able to fully exploit the savings potentials. In accordance with the motto "cooperation on a broad basis", KliP is to be realised quickly by the year 2010, and climate protection is to become a focal element of communal policy in the long term. The organisational infrastructure has been established in the form of a climate protection coordination office that acts quasi as the motor for climate protection activities. Progress in the implementation of KliP will be assessed on the basis of the targets defined for the individual programmes, as well as the quantitative targets of KliP.

CLIMATE ALLIANCE: MUTUAL EFFORTS FOR SUSTAINABLE CLIMATE PROTECTION

The Climate Alliance, a partnership between the indigenous people on the upper Rio Negro and towns, communities and Provinces in Austria, impresses primarily with its constructive cooperation. The indigenous communities determine the contents and form of support themselves, in cooperation with the Instituto Socioambiental in Sao Paulo and the Austrian organisation Horizon 3000. In addition to practical improvements to the manufacture and marketing of handicrafts, which provide a living, new, sustainable opportunities that secure food and create income are being investigated in areas with a high population density. Support for the preservation of cultural heritage promotes indigenous self-confidence and has also contributed towards the umbrella organisation of the local indigenous organisations becoming an audible and heard voice for the interests of the 40 indigenous organisations at the regional

and national level. A strong, capable local community is the guarantee for sustainable use and preservation of this enormous, still intact tropical rainforest in the Amazon region.

Climate Alliance Austria appeals to all the Provinces, towns and communities to support proactive measures for climate protection. The member communities undertake to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by the year 2010, to renounce the use of tropical timber, and to support the indigenous partners in the Amazon region in their efforts to preserve their way of life and the rainforest. Thereby, they receive support and assistance from Climate Alliance Austria in the preparation of communal energy concepts, stronger use of renewable energy sources, purchase of fairly traded products, measures to reduce traffic, public relations work, and procurement. For this purpose, Climate Alliance Austria offers nationwide competitions, information materials, and exchange of information and experience. Special consulting services have been developed for companies and schools. All nine Provinces, 425 towns and communities, 200 companies and more than 50 schools have meanwhile joined Climate Alliance Austria.

MODEL PROJECT “SOFT MOBILITY – CAR-FREE TOURISM“

The model project “Soft Mobility – Car-free Tourism” (www.sanftmobil.at) was started in 1998 under the leadership of the Federal ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, together with the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, the two model communities Bad Hofgastein and Werfenweng, and the province of Salzburg with support from the EU. The objective is to improve the quality of life and environment for the inhabitants and guests by reducing traffic-related environmental pollution. The model project implements targets with regard to environment, transport, tourism, technology and regional policy, and aims to illustrate promising sustainable options for Austrian tourism. The focus of measures is not only on sustainable mobility models in the tourism regions and communities, but also on the linking of innovative mobility and tourism offers, and solutions for the problem of travel to and from the destination. The measures are implemented in cooperation with transport companies, vehicle manufacturers, tour operators, tourism organisations and NGOs. Major measures have already been implemented in the first phase, such as:

- The first Austrian regional mobility centre (“Mobilito”) was established in cooperation with the Pongau communities, the Austrian Federal Railways, and Postbus AG (www.mobilito.at);
- An electronic timetable information system comprising all means of transport for the province of Salzburg 2001, an integrated travel information system in Pongau is being installed;
- Attractive offers and cooperation with international transport companies and tour operators for car-free travel to the destination by rail and bus including luggage service, and with bus and taxi transfer (in cooperation with the interest group of Austrian tourism destinations for soft mobility);

- The use of about 100 electric vehicles for various purposes in both communities (e-scooter, e-bicycles and e-mobiles);
- The creation of new tourism packages “car-free holidays”, which link the offers for car-free travel to the destination and soft mobility offers in the communities with many other tourist benefits and accommodation in a meaningful way. First evaluations show that this offer is well accepted by the guests, and that it has resulted in exceptional increases in the number of overnight stays.

CAMPAIGN LIVING RIVERS

The campaign “Living Rivers” was started on the occasion of World Water Day 1998 by the WWF and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The campaign set itself the following targets for the years from 1998 to 2000: Preservation of ecologically important stretches of running water; intensification of ecological lake and river management in conjunction with the necessary flood protection, and an education and awareness initiative for our rivers as lifelines. The campaign targets, which were defined in hectares and km, have not all been reached yet. Therefore, the action plan “Living Rivers” is to be continued. However, the awareness building and information work done within the scope of the campaign “Living Rivers” was extremely successful. In addition to the effective public presentation of 15 model projects in river management, there have been two very successful books on the rivers, numerous participative actions, two River Festivals in Vienna’s City Park with more than 10,000 visitors in total, and numerous media reports. The expression “Lebende Flüsse” (Living Rivers) has been introduced as a brand name for innovation regarding Austria’s rivers, and is also an excellent certificate of Austrian water management at the international level.

RESEARCH PROGRAMME “CULTIVATED LANDSCAPE RESEARCH”

The research programme “Cultivated Landscape Research” investigates new ways for sustainable development of the Austrian landscapes and regions. The research programme is being implemented at the initiative and under the leadership of the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture by several ministries in cooperation with the Provinces since 1992, and currently has a total volume of about 17 million euros. Meanwhile, almost 70 projects have been commissioned, with about 500 researchers from more than 40 disciplines involved. Thereby, landscape is seen as the result of individual and social action, as well as cultural perception. Therefore, interdisciplinary cooperation, especially between the natural sciences and the social sciences and humanities, the integration of actors from various (non-scientific) areas, and early involvement of the general public in the research process is important. The main task is to provide findings on environmental behaviour, on the relationship between quality of life and man’s demands on nature, on the perception of nature, space images, etc. Thereby, research not only has the task of providing scientific findings, but also of making these available for planning and communal administration in an understandable way. Therefore, principle likes transdisciplinarity (integration of actors from non-scientific areas in the conception, processing

and mediation of research activities) and public research (the general public, i.e. the people who can apply the research results, is integrated in the research process at an early stage) apply to all the projects and research modules. Thematically, the programme covers a wide range: It includes the research areas biodiversity and quality of life, perception, genesis and modification of landscapes, multi-functionality and conflicts of use, social infrastructure, water and wetlands, town – country, rural development. In an accompanying project, for example, scope is provided for the topic “Language and Writing in Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research”. There is special promotion for internationalisation of Austrian scientists and their participation in international research promotion programmes. For more information, visit www.klf.at.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PROMOTION

For many years now, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology has established support programmes aimed at shifting the transport of goods from the roads to environmentally friendly modes of transport such as rail and waterways. Programme evaluations confirm the success of these measures to shift transport and reduce pollutant emissions. Therefore, these programmes will continue to be promoted in the future. In particular, this concerns:

- The programme to support intermodal freight transport by road, rail and ship with the aim of balancing out the system-immanent disadvantages of intermodal transport (reloading) and increasing private investments in intermodal transport. This programme supports reloading facilities, transport equipment, and innovative technologies and systems.
- The programme to support the expansion of connecting railways (as a supplement to the programme to support intermodal freight transport) improves the development opportunities of door-to-door transport by rail. Thereby, corporate investments in the construction, expansion and modernisation of connecting railways are supported.
- The pilot programme for the development of intermodal transport on the Danube waterway aims at supporting the establishment of regular intermodal transport services on the Danube with so-called environmental premiums in the start-up phase (3 years).

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS FOR MAJOR EVENTS

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management has initiated pilot projects for environmentally friendly transport solutions for major events. As a first step, a planning handbook “Major Events – Environmentally Friendly and Without Traffic Congestion” was developed and made available to the event organisers and authorities. As a second step, a nationwide invitation for tenders was carried out to find innovative event organisers for pilot projects to implement the measures recommended in the handbook. An expert panel selected three model events: Wieselburg Trade Fair 1998, the Nordic World Championships 1999, and the International Horticultural Show 2000. As a third step, the preparation and implementation of exemplary transport and marketing concepts for the three model events were promoted. These pilot projects demonstrated successfully that the environmental burdens can be reduced significantly with the proper handling of visitor traffic at major events (for example, about 70% of the spectators at the Nordic World Championships in Ramsau did not come in their own car). At the same time, the burdens for the local population were minimised. Due to the successful pilot projects and the conclusions drawn from them, corporate environmental support for transport and mobility measures was also made available to the organisers of major events as the fourth step.

NETWORK FOOD RETAIL - AGRICULTURE

Structural changes in the area of local supply and in agriculture have had serious consequences for rural areas in recent years. In the province of Styria, for example, two thirds of the local grocers have had to close their shops since 1960 – in total, 145 communities do not have a local supplier any more. In addition, it has become increasingly difficult for farmers to secure an income in recent years. Professional direct marketing is one alternative way to increase the added value in agriculture and to secure farms. With a customised network of regional direct marketers and existing local grocers, a new model has been created. Agricultural direct marketers offer their products in the local grocers' shops, using the existing infrastructure and thus saving the high costs of self-marketing. The grocers can thus expand their range of products and be more attractive for consumers, who can purchase high-quality direct marketing products and everyday items in their immediate neighbourhood. This leads to a win-win situation on all sides. An important principle of the project is that the grocers must cooperate with the neighbouring regional direct marketers. Only if products from the immediate neighbourhood are no longer available will more distant agricultural producers be integrated in the network. By networking the grocery shops with the agricultural direct marketers, the following targets in the sense of sustainable development are to be reached:

- Promotion of a regionally sustainable cycle economy;
- Low environmental burdens through short transport distances;
- Securing the locations in naturally grown centres
- Creation and securing of jobs in agriculture and trade.

„KÄSESTRASSE BREGENZERWALD“

“KäseStrasse Bregenzerwald” (Bregenzerwald Cheese Route) is the pilot project in the regional development programme to promote the areas agriculture, tourism and business. The regional philosophy and strategy behind this project is to preserve the living space Bregenzerwald. Throughout this cheese-making region, the making of cheese is presented under the motto “from the hayfork to the dinner fork”. The initial starting point for the development of this project was the “First Vorarlberg Cheese Summit” in Bezau in 1994, where some 80 businesses from the fields of agriculture, tourism, dairies, gastronomy, trade and commerce discussed the future of the cheese landscape. In the subsequent sensitisation phase, attempts were made to improve the public image of dairies, Alps and cheese-making farmers through festivals, markets, awards, etc. In the following years, “KäseStrasse” was planned and implemented as a LEADER project, and finally in May 1998 it was opened with a gala evening and 72 events throughout the region Bregenzerwald. Since then, “KäseStrasse Bregenzerwald” has established itself as an innovative project.

5-STEP PROGRAMME FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF NATURA 2000

This joint project of WWF Austria and the Austrian Chamber of Commerce pursues the goal of harmonising the interests of nature conservation with those of business:

Step 1: Dialogue and Transparency: In order to achieve acceptance, a new kind of dialogue between ecology and economy is necessary for the entire process – from the identification of protection zones through definition of the management plans to implementation of the nature impact assessments: Sufficient information for the population about the technical and legal criteria according to which areas are nominated and the need for integration of a certain area is determined, concrete information about the consequences, and sufficient opportunity for the communities, landowners, entrepreneurs and nature conservation experts concerned to make a statement.

Step 2: Active area management: The management plans are an active instrument for balancing interests: Economic activities do not necessarily have to give way, but they must be coordinated with the individual ecological purpose of the protection zone. Since area management goes beyond the borders of the Provinces, it is the responsibility of the federal government and the Provinces to prepare coordinated standards, and to define the protection targets and uniform indicators for measuring whether the targets are reached.

Step 3: Legal security: The EU Directives must be implemented in Austrian law quickly in the interests of legal security with regard to the planning and further development of enterprises. Otherwise, if the implementation deadline is missed, extremely difficult issues concerning the possible direct application of individual provisions of the Directives would have to be clarified in every single authorisation procedure in an affected zone. Moreover, the individual laws must clearly define which projects are subject to a nature impact assessment to avoid every single authorisation procedure having to be preceded by a separate procedure to determine the need

for a nature impact assessment. The necessary amendments to Austrian law resulting from the EU Directives must be implemented in an efficient and practical manner.

Step 4: Efficient procedural handling. A nature impact assessment must generally be carried out for all plans and projects that could result in significant impairment of Natura 2000 zones. This assessment ensures that the impact of business activities is in compliance with the targets of the EU nature conservation standards. This is achieved through alternative assessments, weighing of interests, and possibly by balancing measures. The nature impact assessment must be integrated in this system of impact assessments and authorisation procedures in such a way that the cost of all the procedures is concentrated to the necessary level by combining procedures and assessments, and that the technical demands of environmental protection and nature conservation are taken into account.

Step 5: Sufficient financing: In order to be able to implement Natura 2000 reliably, additional funds must be made available.

FIELD OF ACTION "AUSTRIA'S RESPONSIBILITY"

LAKE CONSTANCE AGENDA 21 – A TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAKE CONSTANCE CONFERENCE

Initiated in 1999 by the International Lake Constance Conference, the Lake Constance Agenda 21 is the first international project of a Regional Agenda in Europe. The German districts and Swiss cantons bordering on Lake Constance, the province of Vorarlberg and the duchy of Liechtenstein have joined forces in this initiative to support, coordinate and network the wide variety of local activities and project ideas in the field of sustainability. This creates the necessary conditions for the various Local Agendas to be put in context with the overall development of the region. The 13 Agenda offices established for this purpose around the lake should help to achieve a uniform standard with regard to sustainability, thus also making a significant contribution towards regional identity.

ECO-POINTS SYSTEM

Limiting the volumes of freight transport in sensitive Alpine valleys has long been an important issue for Austria to protect man and nature. A major instrument available to Austria in this context is the Eco-points System provided for in accordance with Protocol No. 9 of the treaty on Austrian accession to the EU, which aims at a permanent and environmentally sustainable reduction of noise and pollutant emissions caused by heavy-duty vehicles. With the Eco-points System, total NOx emissions from heavy-duty vehicles in transit through Austria are to be reduced by 60% between January 1, 1992 and December 31, 2003. The Eco-points System will expire in December 2003. In the interest of guaranteeing uninterrupted protection for man and the environment from the negative impacts of road freight transport – and especially against the backdrop of the planned EU enlargement – specific long-term solutions must be in force as of January 1, 2004, which will continue to assure the environmental improvements resulting from application of the Eco-points System in a long-term and sustainable manner after 2003. Therefore, Austria supports the special consideration of sensitive areas like mountains, coasts or wetlands in the future directive on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures.

THE TRANSPORT PROTOCOL WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ALPINE CONVENTION

Austria as the initiator and motor of the Alpine Convention played a significant role in preparing the extensive transport protocol for sustainable transport development in the Alps, the most recent implementation protocol within the scope of the Alpine Convention signed by the majority of the contractual parties in the year 2000. The contents of this protocol are in accordance with the action requirements and major concepts planned at the national level. For example, the development of an environmentally sustainable transport system from local through regional to national and even various international levels of action has already been integrated in various activities, such as the Austrian National Transport Concept, or in certain concepts at the provincial level. In other areas, such as the development of environmental

quality targets or the assessment and consideration of transport impacts in the development of tourism facilities, the relevant parameters of the transport protocol will have to be considered in future. In the interest of the transport protocol, orientation towards the so-called principle of neighbourhood and short distances will be more important in future, thus minimising both passenger and goods movements as much as possible, especially through investments or improvements in the interaction between road and rail transport. Customer-friendly and environmentally friendly public transport systems for sustainable preservation and improvement of the education and business infrastructure, as well as recreational and leisure activities in the Alpine region must be established and expanded. Equally, environmental burdens due to air traffic, including noise from air traffic, must be reduced, transport connections to airports close to the Alps must be improved, and roads must be protected from natural hazards in regions with special burdens.

THE ACCESSION INITIATIVE OF THE WWF

The aim of the WWF “Accession Initiative” in the course of EU enlargement is to illustrate the threats to nature and at the same time actively promote the opportunities for nature conservation and sustainable development. Thereby, the Accession Initiative concentrates on three core areas:

- Nature conservation: Rapid implementation of Natura 2000 in the candidate countries.
- Agriculture and rural development: Environmentally friendly design of agricultural policy in the candidate countries, and of EU agricultural policy and structural funds.
- Water: Implementation of the Water Framework Directive in the candidate countries.

Thereby, there is close cooperation with EU institutions, governments, business and independent organisations (NGOs) within the scope of the Accession Initiative. Special attention will be paid to the candidate countries Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary. At the same time, NGOs from the candidate countries will benefit from the many years of experience of the WWF within the EU. Thus, they will be established as effective advocates of the environment – not only during but also beyond the accession process. The Accession Initiative is coordinated in Vienna and works closely with other WWF offices in Brussels, the candidate countries and the other EU member states.

THE ENERGY GLOBE AWARD AS AN AUSTRIAN INITIATIVE IN THE AREA OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Worldwide, there are numerous initiatives and projects to demonstrate that renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency make a significant contribution towards environmental and climate protection and towards sustainable economic growth. The Energy Globe awards prizes to the world’s best projects in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. 920 projects from 72 countries in 4 categories were submitted for the Energy Globe Award, which was organised for the first time in 2000 at the initiative of the Upper Austrian Energy Saving Association with support from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and

Water Management. Each category is endowed with prize money of 10,000 euros. More than 1000 projects and initiatives from 75 countries participated in the Energy Globe Award 2001. The submissions included large plants in the field of renewable energy sources, sustainable initiatives in the transport sector, “model companies” or energy campaigns and strategies. The Energy Globe Award will also be awarded in 2002 and is open for participation by companies, private and public organisations, and individuals from all over the world. In 2001, an Austrian competition – the “**Energy Globe Austria**” – was organised for the first time in the run-up to the Energy Globe Award 2001, where primarily Austrian projects were presented and the leading role of Austria was underlined. Three projects from each province were awarded a prize and presented to the media and the public in a separate gala. All submissions also took part in the international Energy Globe Award 2001. For more information, visit www.esv.or.at/aktuelles/energyglobe/.

AUSTRIA’S ACTIVE ROLE IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND TRANSPORT IN EUROPE

The **WHO Charter on Transport, Environment and Health** is an example of Austria’s active commitment to environmentally sustainable transport within the EU and at the pan-European level. This Charter was negotiated successfully under the Austrian presidency, and adopted by the 3rd WHO Minister Conference in London in 1999. In addition to strategies and targets, it comprises an action plan with 10 focal measures for follow-up (e.g. consideration of environmental and health requirements and relevant targets in transport and regional planning policy and in the relevant plans; promotion of transport modes and regional planning concepts that have the most positive impact on the health of the population, etc.). The new quality of the Charter is underlined by the fact that the health sector has now been included, based on the **Vienna UN/ECE Conference on Transport and Environment** and the adoption of a relevant declaration in 1997. The case study “Evaluation of Traffic-related Health Impacts and Monetisation of Traffic-related External Health Costs Based on the Example of Air Pollutants”, which was conducted in cooperation with Switzerland, France, Austria and the WHO, investigates the impacts of traffic-related air pollution on the health of the population in Austria, and the associated costs. Austria as lead country will now support the implementation of the WHO Charter, as well as the UN/ECE Vienna Declaration on Transport and Environment intensively. As a concrete contribution towards implementation of the WHO Charter, Austria will continue the good cooperation with France and Switzerland, as well as Sweden, in support of the preparation of WHO guidelines to evaluate and implement the traffic-related health costs. In the course of continued active follow-up on the UN/ECE Vienna Declaration on Transport and Environment, the successful initiatives and projects in the area of transport in sensitive areas will continue to be pursued more strongly.

CASE EXAMPLES OF AUSTRIA'S ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SCOPE OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**PRESERVATION OF THE LIVING SPACE "RAINFOREST" THROUGH PROMOTION OF SELF-ADMINISTRATION OF THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION IN THE AMAZON LOWLAND**

On the occasion of the UN Summit in Rio in 1992, the Austrian national initiative "Forest – 3rd World" was started. So far, more than 30 projects have been funded and implemented by Austrian Development Cooperation with various project carriers and partner organisations. In a closed forest area three times the size of Austria in the Columbian Amazon lowland, one of the most successful programmes of the national initiative is being continued. The local partner in Columbia, COAMA, even received the Alternative Nobel Award 1999 for this project. In a concerted overall programme, COAMA has been cooperating with the local indigenous population there for many years. The aim of the programme is to strengthen the indigenous culture, improve the conditions of life, and promote social and institutional structures to guarantee autonomous administration of the region by the indigenous population. Currently, Austria is primarily promoting the establishment of adequate health facilities, further education for teachers, and the development of bilingual school models.

BETTER USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES IN NICARAGUA: DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY PRODUCTION SYSTEMS IN THE BUFFER ZONE OF THE RAINFOREST RESERVATION "INDIO MAIZ"

For more than 10 years now, Austrian Development Cooperation (ÖEZA) has been supporting the people in the region both financially and with technical know-how. In this project in Nicaragua, a wide variety of objectives are pursued: The primary goal is to preserve the rainforest reservation. Due to the complex socio-economic and agro-ecological situation in the southeast of the country, however, this main target can only be reached if the existing resources are used more efficiently in the long term. Therefore, a number of targets have been defined for the project, the sustainable result of which should be preservation of the Indio Maiz rainforest: An important first task is to improve the small-farm agricultural and forestry production systems, allowing the farmers to manage their farms independently and efficiently, and to market their products themselves. Palm oil production is also to be made more efficient. A positive "side effect" of this assistance is the creation of new jobs. If these targets can be reached and the newly developing economic cycles can be established permanently, we are a major step closer to preservation of Indio Maiz. The concrete measures for preserving the rainforest reservation are very extensive. Especially in the area of small-farm agriculture and forestry, efforts have been made to establish sustainable culture systems such as beans or ginger. Not least due to the promotion of educational facilities, it was possible to reduce the know-how deficit of the population in the field of ecological agriculture markedly. The cooperation between the cooperatives and ÖEZA and with Unión de Cooperativas Palmeras RL has already led to first successes. The timber capacity of the sawmill was only 56 percent in the year 2000. Together with strategic partners, a sustainable way to deliver timber without destroying the forest is to be found. As a long-term objective, marketing and eco-certification of the entire chain is to be

achieved. An important sub-project is the reforestation programme Esperanza Verde. Within the scope of this programme, 120 hectares will be reforested with indigenous tree species in this region.

SOLAR ENERGY IN ZIMBABWE: ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND CONSULTING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SOLAR UNITS

As a response to the Solar Summit in Harare in 1996, the Austrian Development Cooperation decided to promote the establishment of production and distribution structures for solar units in Zimbabwe. The aim was to set an impulse to create jobs and value added in the country, to improve the standards of hygiene and comfort with a permanent supply of hot water, and thereby to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and/or firewood by exploiting renewable sources of energy. Together with the Technology Development Centre at the University of Harare, collectors have been developed that can be produced cheaply and – above all – using only locally available materials. So far, four companies have started production of the collectors and installation of the systems after appropriate training, and 200 small units and 6 larger plants for schools have been handed over. The demand currently exceeds the production capacities, and more companies may be expected to start production in the near future. In the next phase, test series will be continued to find out how the effectiveness can be increased even further. Moreover, in a similar approach solar driers for agriculture are being developed and offered.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTION: CLEANER PRODUCTION CENTRES

In 1994, the Organisation for Industrial Development (UNIDO) and the Environmental Programme of the United Nations (UNEP) conceived the National Cleaner Production Centre Programme (NCPC). These are national consulting centres in developing countries and in southeast European countries, which are located with ministries, universities and similar institutions, and which are designed as independent non-profit organisations. Their task is to implement environmental information campaigns, and to advise interested local companies about the use of environmentally friendly methods and technologies. This includes the preparation of environmentally friendly production programmes and their use in industrial enterprises, training courses, and government consulting with regard to issues of “environmentally friendly” legislation. Of the 23 centres set up worldwide by UNIDO, eight were (co-)financed by Austria.

In Ethiopia, for example, UNIDO is supporting the government in the development of a private sector on the one hand, and companies in the introduction of energy-saving measures on the other hand. The linking of the two projects is essential for sustainable ecological and economic development of the country, because Ethiopia depends strongly on the import of both energy and consumer goods. By strengthening the services of private and public institutions to promote small enterprises, and with training for young entrepreneurs, additional jobs are to be created. At

the same time, local production of consumer goods is to be revived in order to reduce imports. Consulting and training in selected existing companies should promote the sparing use of energy and efficiency-oriented management, in order to reduce the dependence on imported fossil fuels.

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