

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Strategic orientation

General principles

Development in this region is taking place in highly sensible areas. As a horizontal principle *sustainability* must be part of all the priorities. Especially taken into consideration is that activities are confronted with different user demands. Sustainable concepts are especially requested and implemented in regional and environmental development, the further development of national and nature parks, but also in sector activities, e.g. tourism, leisure economy, technical infrastructure (energy). The principle of sustainability aims at providing relevant development conditions to the living generation, without decreasing the development possibilities for future generations. To reach this point the three dimensions of sustainability, the ecological, the economic and the social one have to be taken into consideration.

- *Ecological sustainability* means the environmental friendly use of natural resources, the improvement of the quality of the environment, the protection of biodiversity and risk prevention for humans and the environment.
- *Economic sustainability* means to create a future oriented economic system and to increase economic capability and competence for innovation.
- *Social sustainability* means social balance, the right for human life and the participation of the population in policy and society.

The implementation of the activities is in line with European and national policies for equal opportunities. To put an end to discrimination and to achieve equal opportunities between the genders is a policy task – *gender mainstreaming* is the strategy. Equal opportunities is no separate topic, it is the basic principle for each single activity. By inclusion of equal opportunities in all the concepts and activities there should be achieved balance and fairness within the society.

Participation of citizens and the use of the whole endogenous and creative potential in amendment to the representative democracy are the main aims of political participation. Participation is an intensive co-operation of different actors and the population in the region and an instrument to achieve a balance of interest and consensus in planning and development processes.

Programme strategy for the development of the cross border region

In the last two programming periods the developments of cross border contacts as well as their intensification and the implementation of joint projects has been the main focus of the cross border activities.

The new programme builds on these experiences and formulates relevant strategies and fields of activities for further development of the Czech-Austrian cross border region along the results of the analyses.

The Austrian-Czech border region is aware of actual incomplete exploitation of the growth potential of its territory:

- Insufficient private and public expenses for education and research restrict exploitation of the human resources potential
- Weak engagement of universities and research institutions as well as enterprises in international networks of development and innovations
- Insufficient interconnection among entrepreneurial subjects on both sides of the border
- Weak spatial, institutional and structural co-operation
- Protection and exploitation of natural assets and cultural heritage of the territory, which provides an opportunity for development of tourism and life of inhabitants

The joint strategy and the Operational Programme are oriented to further develop the common area towards

- Future oriented living and economic area
- Increase the competitiveness of the cross border region and
- Improve the living conditions in this area
- Support European integration on cross border regional and local level

All the activities will be in line with the following principles:

1. Adaptation of the economic and social framework and solving the problems in this cross border region caused by the periphery of these border regions and therefore creation of an integrated regional socio-economic area:

- Improvement of the economic structure, speeding up of structural changes, improvement of the location conditions, development of technology and innovation
- Improvement of transport, technical and other infrastructures, reduction of barriers connected with borders
- Enforcement of a sustainable spatial development
- Reduction of environmental burden, elimination of damages caused to the environment, improvement of the living, working and environmental conditions for the population
- Improvement in education, training and employment
- Development of the human resources
- Development of equality aspects, support of equal opportunities and anti-discrimination
- Enforcement of the endogenous potential of the cross border area

2. Enforcement of cross border relations between the population, organisations and institutions in all sectors:

- Improvement of cross border economic co-operation
- Reduction of barriers and improved connection for cross border transport
- Cross border co-ordination of environmental protection and use of cross border regional resources
- Improvement of the cross border societal and cultural exchange to increase the attractiveness of the living-, housing- and working area

- Creation of cross border networks for co-operation and communication to increase regional identity on both sides of the border

Strategies of the operational programme are focused on creating appropriate conditions for sustainable development in the Austrian-Czech border region with a view to economic, social and education areas. Its competitiveness has to be supported by adequate financial sources with the result that these funds will have a positive impact on the economic growth and subsequently will contribute to sustainable development of the existing potential of the Austrian-Czech border region. Enhancement and improvement of the quality of inner relationships existing in the Austrian-Czech border region represent a crucial factor of the persistent development. It is also required to enhance the quality of the economic structure, scientific and academic contacts the basis of which is formed by network linking, all with the aim to improve flow of the information and its exchange, skills and knowledge.

A pronounced enhancement of quality or more precisely increase of competitiveness in the context of the European space creates a condition of the persistent economic and social growth in the Austrian-Czech border region. The long-term competitiveness itself can only enable the sustainable growth, which is a prerequisite to decrease regional differences within the EU.

Following quality aspects were selected for forming strategies of the Operational Programme:

- Development of the economic environment connected with science, research and innovations development as well as human resources development with regard to the cross border status of co-operation (Lisbon process). Factors for the economic development are:
 - o Open entrepreneurial environment with the emphasis on the sustainable tourism development
 - o Advanced system of research, development and innovations, introduction of new manufacturing technologies
 - o Inter-connection of academic and entrepreneurial sphere
 - o Flexible labour market with qualified labour force
 - o Modern society that enhances purposefully and methodically its education level (knowledge society in its all aspects)
 - o Cross border co-operation of local communities, revival of joint tradition and living culture
- Attractive environment in all its dimensions (Gothenburg process). Factors for the attractive environment are:
 - o Protection and improvement of the environment, care of the natural landscape potential and its exploitation, prevention from risks
 - o Development of environmental infrastructure
 - o Accessibility of the border region

The Austrian-Czech border region represents a territory having a sufficient growth potential from the economic, social and cultural point of view and these growth provisions will allow a gradual improvement of living conditions of its population.

Development objectives

The global objective of the programme is to increase and intensify the co-operation in this cross border region and the support of sustainable economic growth by means of removal of existing barriers and enhancement of the whole development potential of the territory. The OP contains a broad variety of topics, which are connected with each other and have effects for several fields of activity. To be mentioned in the primary stage are the:

- Minimisation of the effects of the existing barriers
- Reduction of the regional as well as cross border socio-economic disparities
- Preservation and improvement of the living conditions
- Valorisation of natural and cultural heritage
- Regional governance and strengthening of network and co-operation structures

Objectives of the Operational Programme Objective 3 Territorial Co-operation Austria – Czech Republic

