

Strategy and General Programme Objectives

The cross-border co-operation programme presents a coherent and effective response to the obstacles and weaknesses of the region and defines suitable strategies for a common future development of the Hungarian-Austrian border region on the basis of the experiences of the last programme period and the conclusions of the regional analysis. The strategy includes an overall strategic goal of the programme and identifies specific objectives to be reached by the measures under the chosen priority axes of the programme. The main bases for the development of the strategies were the following resources:

- Socio-economic analysis and the SWOT-analysis of the Hungarian-Austrian border region;
- National programmes and strategies on both sides of the border;
- Experiences from the previous and still running cross-border co-operation programmes: INTERREG IIA, PHARE CBC and INTERREG IIIA (1995-2006);
- Legal provisions for implementing the Structural Funds' co-financed programmes, especially the cross-border co-operation programmes under the Objective "European territorial co-operation";
- Conclusions of the discussions of the bilateral programming group, responsible authorities, experts and key persons at the regional level.

Overall strategic goal

The **overall strategic goal** of the programme is to **foster the economical, social, environmental and cultural development of the border region and to reduce regional disparities by means of cross-border co-operation. By supporting the implementation of joint activities and the sustainable use of endogenous resources the CBC-programme will contribute to the establishment of a prosperous region with cultural and ecological diversity and a high quality of life for its inhabitants.** The suitable development strategies will be based on the following regional features:

- a high dynamic of economic growth and impulses in the northern area;
- a great variety of cultural, social and natural resources;
- a high potential of human resources and training opportunities;
- a stringent awareness and a number of initiatives on sustainable usage of resources;
- a high level of regional disparities between north-south and east-west;
- a limited accessibility in some parts of the region.

Furthermore the CBC Programme aims to achieve the following **specific objectives**:

- **To invest in sustainable growth** by evolving into an economically strong competitive region with a high standard of living, using the vicinity to the metropolitan growth centres as stimulus for the economic development of the whole region, concentrating on renewable forms of energy, developing new value chains, stimulating research and development co-operation among universities and companies etc.
- **To maintain and evolve the attractiveness and quality of life** by promoting comprehensive and integrated actions towards the sustainable and equitable development of the programming area, supporting biosphere management for the preservation of the ecological and cultural diversity, supporting common risk prevention and emergency management, supporting tourism etc.
- **To bridge regional imbalances** by bridging the development gaps between east and west as well as north and south divide should be tackled as well but according to the size of the CBC programme there may only be little effects, fostering social cohesion and good neighbourly relations, improving the accessibility in the remote parts of the programme area, serving the needs of the local resident people, supporting the establishment of polycentric urban and regional networks etc.

In order to reach the **overall goal** and the **specific objectives** of the programme the following **priority axes** will be established:

- **Innovation, integration and competitiveness (Priority 1)⁷**
The overall goal of this priority is to develop an economically competitive region through innovation and integration across the border. Encouraging entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by innovation within research and development, SME co-operation, tourism, human resources as well as networking and clusters are the main fields of activity in this priority. These activities need to be supported by an improved social infrastructure and public services. The attractiveness of the border region will be supported by more and better jobs just as an increasing investment in human capital. The priority supports bridging the development gaps between north-south and east-west.
- **Sustainable development and accessibility (Priority 2)⁸**
The priority aims to bring a high level of environmental protection, social equity and cohesion, economic prosperity and active promotion of sustainable development to the programming area. Maintaining and increasing the quality of life in the border region the priority focuses its actions on key challenges like sustainable transport, regional accessibility and eco-mobility, management of natural resources just as social and cultural co-operation. Especially the links and relations on all levels are to be intensified.
- **Technical assistance (Priority 3)**
To ensure an effective programme management and information flow, goal of the technical assistance priority is to improve the quality of cross-border co-operation and management tools.

⁷ This priority is strongly linked to the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs of the European Union (Commission of the European Communities: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION - Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs: Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013. COM(2005) 0299, 05.07.2005)

⁸ Related to EU's Sustainable Development Strategy this priority concentrates on the sustainable Development as an overarching concept.