

START UP INFORMATION

City/Partnership	Metropolitan Area Styria – Graz & Surroundings
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Project	Urban – Rural Cooperation

Cooperation Thematic Area	Concrete Challenge Faced
Mobility, Land use management	The main challenges are to overcome the urban sprawl, to avoid sealing, to minimize emission and to promote sustainable and alternative mobility solutions. Because of demographic challenges (population decline in the periphery areas and population growth in the urban and suburban areas) the region must ensure appropriate measures.

SHORT SUMMARY OF THE CITY'S CONTEXT

The functional, economic and demographic centre of Styria is known as its “metropolitan area” and is characterized by both urbanity and rural areas. It includes the City of Graz and the districts Graz-Surrounding & Voitsberg. With its 52 municipalities it covers about 1.900 km².

Approximately 487.000 inhabitants live in the region, this leads to an average population density of 257 IN/km² (City of Graz included). Regarding the single values in the two districts Voitsberg and Graz-Umgebung, the population density varies from 20 IN/km² in very rural areas to 100 IN/km² in peripheral-rural and 600 IN/km² in (sub)-urban municipalities in the south of Graz. Beside the City of Graz there are two sub centres in the western part of the area: the cities Koeflach & Voitsberg.

Referring to the geographical framework, the area is embedded in the south eastern alpine foothills, not far from the border between Austria and Slovenia. The northern and eastern transition zone of the city region of Graz is affected by a relatively abrupt switchover from urban to rural areas once from a topographic and twice from a functional point.

***CONCRETE CHALLENGE FACED DESCRIPTION**

The population growth in the city and its suburban surrounding is in contrast to the trend to emigration in peripheral areas in the western part of the region. Because of the heterogeneous preconditions of the region, the challenges in our cooperation should be to counteract problems and release potentials in an innovative way.

Land consumption and the need of areas for business settlements on the one and vacancies and open areas on the other hand engage us to find new approaches on a local and regional scale.

Increasing daily traffic forces us to implement systems on a low threshold level like multimodal knots or micro public transport systems to change people’s mobility habits. Currently approximately 137.657 people commute every day to the “metropolitan area”, many of them with their own car.

***MAIN STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED DESCRIPTION**

Regional Development Agency “Metropolitan Area of Styria”

The “Regionalmanagement” is a non-profit institution and responsible for the intercommunal development and information exchange of its 52 member-municipalities (including the city of Graz). It’s financed by the Province of Styria and the municipalities.

City of Graz and municipalities of the surroundings

All municipalities and their political representatives are invited to develop and implement intercommunal approaches and projects. Mayors and deputies are member of the regional assembly and regional board, two political bodies which discuss and enact measures for regional development.

International affairs-, regional planning-, traffic planning departments of the city of Graz and the province of Styria

Important partner are departments in the city of Graz and the Province of Styria, who have specific knowlage to relevant issues like traffic, planning, economics and environment.

Transport organisations

On operational side, there is the Styrian integrated transport alliance – a cooperative institution by virtue of private law contracts between the regional authorities and individual transport companies. The Styrian network fare system entitles people to use the services of about 60 transport companies.

<p>Expectation of the cooperation activities (Please, explain what kind of activities the programme can support you)</p>	<p>Working meeting, site visits, workshops, seminars, etc.</p> <p>Our experience taught us, that site visits give the most efficient “kick off” to find the best topics and ways of cooperation.</p>
	<p>Joint participation in relevant thematic events. Clusters meeting</p> <p>Following the experiences of site visits, special focus groups can work out topics, projects and action plans in cluster meetings and seminars.</p>
	<p>Specific training</p> <p>If there are interesting good practices, contacts to experts for specific trainings are useful.</p>
	<p>Webinars on concrete topics</p> <p>Webinars could also be an additional possibility to go into detail of specific established projects.</p>
	<p>Cluster networks (Labs between cities)</p>
	<p>Business Roundtable discussions and joint activities</p>
<p>Suggested period for Site Visits</p>	<p>LAC site visit</p> <p>Initial proposal: week April 09– 13</p>
	<p>EU site visit</p> <p>Initial proposal: End of May, June</p>

PROBLEM / CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED

Mobility

In 2007 a suburban railway system, the "S-Bahn", has been introduced by the province of Styria. The S-Bahn is the most important urban transport project in Styria and it reacts to urgent issues regarding mobility. Together with the regional bus-system and urban tram lines it builds the transport network in Styria. But not all municipalities are located in the catchment area of this highly efficient transport system. Especially the municipalities of the districts of Graz-Umgebung and Voitsberg with its dispersed and peripheral settlements do not have a comprehensive public transport service, although. Many municipalities have not experienced any extensions or adaptations of public transport in the last few years. Rather, the old bus timetables were rigidly fixed, or the supply even reduced, and thus the mobility demands of today's time can hardly be fulfilled for all inhabitants. In addition, the "last-mile" problem is predominantly because of the settlement structures. This has resulted in an increase in the degree of motorization in the municipalities in recent years. To mitigate this problem in rural areas, there are first attempts to try out a micro-public transport system in addition to the existing public transport. The role of the regional management (RMSZR) concerning the regional transport system is to support municipalities on the topic of mobility and to track down regional solutions together with all relevant stakeholders. As a regional hub we are helping municipalities to gain funding and then to implement innovative, cross-community mobility solutions.

- The demand in the region with regard to multimodal mobility planning is very important in order to react to the high affinity for motor vehicle traffic in rural areas. To facilitate mobility from rural to urban areas without an own car and to promote the transfer to environmentally friendly means of transport, the most appropriate combination of transport ways for the particular purpose of the route and the current destination must be enabled. An innovative method is to set up multimodal mobility nodes. A multimodal node is a mobility hotspot that links the individual modes of transport such as public transport, bicycle traffic, and car traffic (rental car, car sharing and taxi). This facilitates mobility without a private car.
- Where people live and where people work is not so clear anymore. Commuting patterns and mobility requirements will change significantly. Commuting and quality of life are closely connected and might play an increasingly important role. Less commuting might support the transition towards a low-carbon society.
- International mobility is a related question as well as the increased mobility of companies. Possibly also the seasonality of work.

New business models and labour markets

Urbanisation, suburbanisation, rural depopulation and counter-urbanisation processes all impact on the development of new businesses and job opportunities in rural and urban areas. The main challenges currently confronted are the following:

- Growth (economic, population, transport, etc.), expansion means loss of space. For this and more reasons it is therefore difficult to think in an isolated way about business development.
- The lack of connectivity between the city and the rural areas has to be closed. To decide on the most appropriate location for new companies is a constant challenge.

- Cooperation for location management. Shallow cooperation works well, but when it gets deeper and more far-reaching, it becomes more difficult. Beyond the challenge of cooperation on equal terms, governance problems become increasingly an issue.
- A related question is how to make room for local dynamism (and dynamics) in rural areas. It is seen as a problem when business developments are too large scale. Small industrial parks could be an alternative.
- Smart specialisation strategies should be about prioritising sectors that “make sense” territorially but not rule out other sectors.
- A related question is how and under which conditions socio-economic relations between urban, peri-urban and rural areas generate synergies that translate into a more balanced and more inclusive socio-economic development.
- A key question for future labour markets and our overarching research questions will be required skills and qualifications.
- Reference is made to the changing geography of jobs with more office-less work, and more ICT. A big open question will be who the service providers of the future are, where they are located and how this impacts on urban-rural relations. ICT changes things as it allows greater distances between companies, their markets and their employees (lower overhead costs, less need of space). Decentralized work has to become easier in peripheral regions.

Circular Economy

The basic idea of the circular economy is to maintain the value of products, materials and resources in the economy for as long as possible, and to minimise the generation of waste. The circular economy is seen as an essential contribution to the EU's efforts to develop a sustainable, low carbon, resource efficient and competitive economy. The European Commission adopted an ambitious Circular Economy Package to help European businesses and consumers to make the transition to a stronger and more circular economy where resources are used in a more sustainable way.

- Key questions are what it might imply practically, which models will be implemented, and what new combinations of skills will be required.
- A question is whether the circular economy can increase the potential for “smart growth”, for example by containing urban sprawl. Managing space (containing urban sprawl, managing empty spaces in urban and rural areas) is generally seen as important.
- Open space in cities is not only an amenity but might also help to reduce pollution and negative agglomeration externalities from city growth. For example, open fresh air corridors are essential in conurbations. The connection with the transition towards a low carbon economy and what this might mean for urban-rural relations (and synergies) needs further exploration.

Related Regional Documents

Metropolitan Area of Styria: One of seven regions in the province of Styria

The Regional Management Agency of the Metropolitan Area of Styria is a non-governmental institution and responsible for the city of Graz and the 51 municipalities in the surrounding (Districts Graz surrounding and Voitsberg).

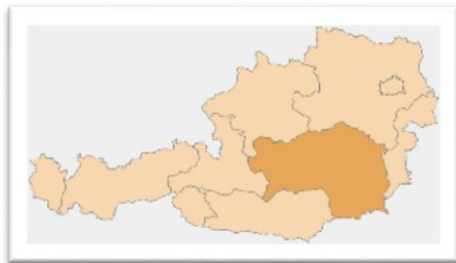


Fig. 1: Austria, Province of Styria



Fig. 2: Styria, Metropolitan Area of Styria; German: "Steirischer Zentralraum"

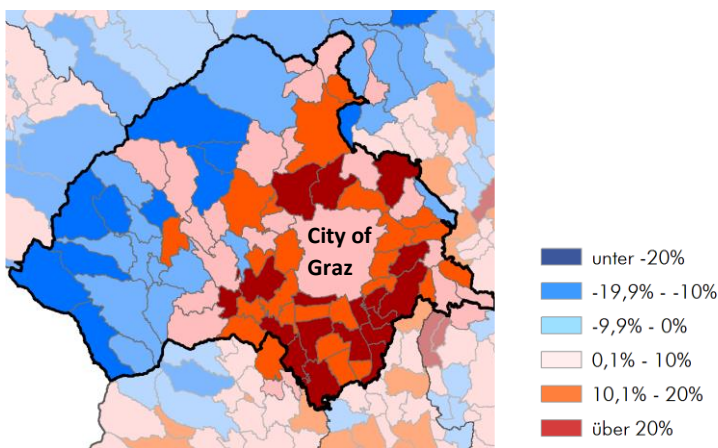


Fig. 3: Population forecast 2013-2030, Metropolitan Area of Styria: Demographic challenges by population decrease in the western rural part, population increase in the (sub-)urban areas in and around Graz.

Mission statement Metropolitan Area of Styria - „Regionales Entwicklungsleitbild Steirischer Zentralraum 2014+ Graz - Graz-Umgebung – Voitsberg“

The development guidelines of the Metropolitan Area of Styria form the basis for an efficient regional development in the planning period from 2014-2020. The aims of the mission statement are to pool regional resources, promote interregional cooperation and to encourage projects to become realized with the support of the Province of Styria. The major content of the mission statement are 4 overall regional objectives and 15 strategic fields of action. This content was developed in a participative process, together with experts, politicians and entrepreneurs. The results were discussed and decided in the panels of regional conferences and regional assemblies.

The 4 core themes for 15 action fields are:

- 1) **Regional cooperation** (regional governance, inner-regional cooperation, bilateral cooperation, transnational cooperation, environmental monitoring)
- 2) **Strengthening business- and research locations** (site development and management, research and innovation, supraregional accessibility, sustainable development of city-regions, regional education- and employment policy)
- 3) **Mobility and environment** (regional mobility, management of natural areas, energy & climate)
- 4) **Improving life-quality and common welfare** (demographic change/ diversity, health / life-quality, regional identity)



Fig. 4: Mission statement of the region.

„Planning Law of Styria“ – „Steiermärkisches Raumordnungsgesetz“

This law regulates the spatial organization of Styria and contains the definitions of the seven regions of Styria, like the Metropolitan Area of Styria. Regions are spatial units, each of which is intended to provide the necessary spatial prerequisites for as many basic functions as possible so that they are well-equipped and are functional habitats for their population. Basic functions are the functions of living, working, recreation, education, supply and disposal, social communication and transport.

In each of these seven regions there is a regional management, like the Regional Management Metropolitan Area of Styria. The structure behind the regional management consists of the regional board and regional assembly. They form the political and strategic body of the region. The Planning Law of Styria also defines the members and the tasks of these institutions.

Regional development program for the Metropolitan Area of Styria - „Regionales Entwicklungsprogramm für die Region Steirischer Zentralraum“

Each of the seven regions of Styria, like the Metropolitan Area of Styria, has an own Regional development program. The programs are regulations of the Styria state government. They contain objectives and measures on the ecological, social, economic and cultural development of the planning regions. Also they consist of a regulation text, the explanatory notes and the drawings (regional plan). For example, priority areas for industry and commerce, agriculture, residential areas, green zones.

The Regional development program for the Metropolitan Area of Styria form the framework for local spatial planning and is implemented by municipalities in the local development concept and the land use plan.

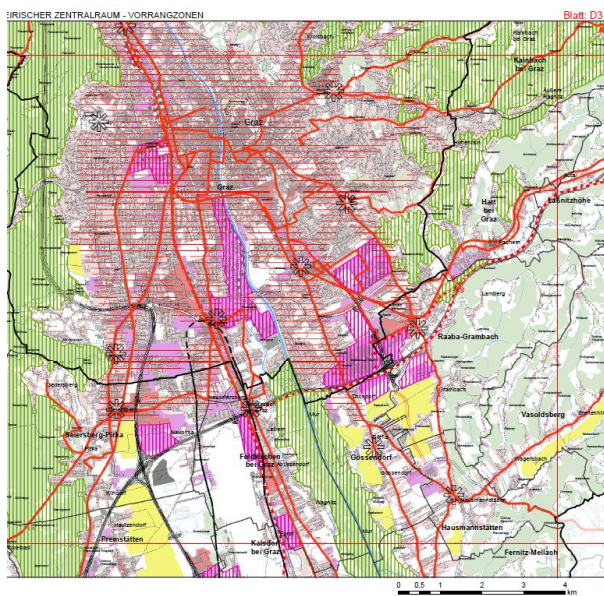


Fig. 5: Regional Development Program. Balancing various interests between conflicting subjects, definition of important socio-economic centers, sets out focus for further spatial development and defines priority areas.

New Styrian Regional Development Law 2017 – „Steiermärkisches Landes- und Regionalentwicklungsgesetz 2017“

A new law with the aim to reinforce the regional and interregional cooperation will probably come into force at the beginning of 2018. The law will regulate the cooperation of the Styrian government, Styrian regions and municipalities and ensure the basic financing of regional activities. For the first time, this law defines the tasks of regional development by the legislator and provides them with clear implementation tools and coordinated (strategic) processes.

The aim is to develop the region as an attractive working and living space for people and companies by creating and securing jobs, developing attractive locations for businesses, designing target-group-oriented mobility solutions, improving the quality of education and care infrastructure and creating attractive leisure infrastructure and conserving natural resources.

Regionaler Mobilitätsplan - Regional mobility plan

Through a participatory planning process with regional decision-makers and representatives of the region, the priorities for a viable transport system are developed at the regional level. The overarching European, national and Styrian-wide objectives, strategies and concepts are being taken into consideration as well and the interfaces to the regional and local responsibilities in the process are also defined.

The aim of each regional mobility plan is to develop a strategy for a sustainable and efficient regional transport system. The plans will be developed on the basis of an integrated planning approach (motorized, non-motorized, individual and public transport), with a focus on a future-oriented, climate-friendly and energy-efficient transport system.

Current a Regional Mobility Plan was recently developed for the subregion Voitsberg. The guidelines in the process for the regional mobility plan Metropolitan Area of Styria/ Subregion Voitsberg are:

- To ensure the access to public transport.
- To support public transport and demand-oriented mobility.
- To support optimal connection of individual and public transport.
- To ensure a fair mobility for all population groups.

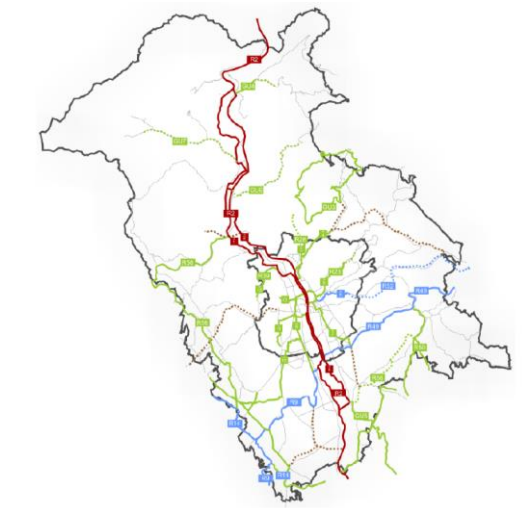


Fig. 6: Regional mobility plan. Participatory planning process with regional decision-makers. Defines main axes for efficient mobility on the regional level

Demand-oriented micro-public transport system

A concrete goal in the Metropolitan Area of Styria is to establish a demand-oriented micro-public transport system in the form of a hailed shared taxi in all municipalities of Graz-Umgebung. The task of regional management is to provide a coordinating interface between the participating municipalities, the planning body and the province of Styria. Currently, GUSTMOBIL is implemented in 29 municipalities in the district of Graz-Umgebung.

Cooperation Platform Urban Regions - „Kooperationsplattform Stadtregion“

Since 2012, the Regionalmanagement Metropolitan Area of Styria has been participating in the ÖREK partnership "Cooperation Platform Urban Region" and is actively involved with institutions and regional developers from all over Austria. Every year there is a city regional day in another city.

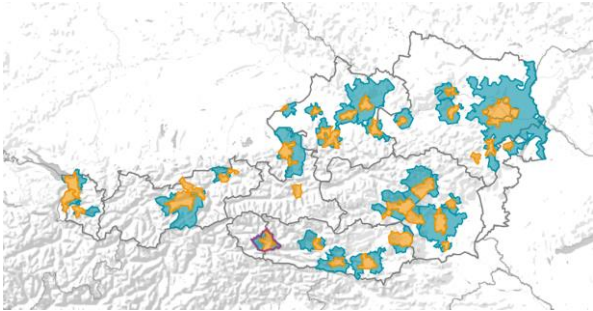


Fig. 7: Cooperation platform Urban Regions in Austria:
<https://www.stadtregionen.at>