



# REPORT ON CLUSTERS IN STYRIA

ESPECIALLY CROSS BORDER ACTIVITIES OF THE CLUSTERS

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## Clusters in Styria

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### 1. General- description of the cluster policy of the SFG in Styria

During little more than one decade, Styria has changed from a region in crisis dominated by heavy industry into one of Austria`s economic motors. While in the period from 1980-1994 the Styrian economy was slightly below the Austrian average, from 1994 onwards the Styrian economy grew rapidly and is still growing.

Today every third Austrian high-tech product comes from Styria, in other words, Styria has become Austria`s model economic area.

One of the reasons for this dramatic economical change was that Styria had introduced extraordinary economic programs in order to stimulate the Styrian economy, especially the program for the establishment of clusters. As the economical datas from Styria mentioned above show, the Styrian “way of clusters” was very successful, clusters in Styria are now generally viewed as a motor of the entire Styrian economy.

The first cluster which was set up in Syria was the Automotive Cluster (ACstyria). It was first developed within the SFG as a network, and later transformed into a limited company of its own. The ACstyria can be seen as a best practice example for all the other clusters in Styria. The automotive sector became the most important sector for the Styrian economy. The success of the Acstyria and the whole automotive economy convinced the Styrian government to follow the policy of clusters. That is why the cluster policy is still important even after more than ten years after its first implementation.

As set out above, the automotive sector with its cluster was the first, however six new clusters were to follow: Wood and timber, human technology, eco-technology, materials and two very new clusters in the sectors food technology and creative industries. Concerning the clusters in the area of material and also creative industries, they are more like “horizontal networks” what means that they function in a slightly different way than the other “traditional” clusters that are implemented along the value chain.

The SFG, as an outsourced 100% owned institution by the federal government of Styria, is in general responsible in Styria for the establishment of clusters.

There is a standard procedure to set up a cluster:

- analyzing fields of strength in the Styrian economy
- animating leading companies
- describing the whole sector
- invitation of the main research institutes
- informal workshops with selected companies
- defining key fields of action
- invitation to participate and set up of the cluster
- building the operative structure of the cluster
- start of the actual cluster activities

As representative of the Styrian government, the SFG is owing about 100% of the cluster at the starting phase, then gradually reducing its share to about 26%. However, it is important that the SFG remains in the cluster organisation in order to be able to ensure that the cluster stays on the path originally outlined.

The next steps in the cluster policy of the SFG comprise to strengthen the new clusters – material, human technology, food technology and creative industries clusters, while getting the “older ones” towards internationalisation and opening new markets for members.

## 2. Overview on the clusters and their cross border activities

### Automobile Cluster Styria



**Goal:**

Grouping all in the automotive value chain available forces of the region, thereby increasing the innovation strength and international competitiveness

<http://www.acstyria.com>

**Focus:**

Communication and information platform, marketing of the automotive region Styria, development of existing networks, initiation of co-operation projects and training programs, technology and knowledge transfer

**Products of cluster companies:**

development and production of vehicles, e.g. the models Chrysler Voyager, Jeep Grand Cherokee, Mercedes E u. G, BMW X3, Saab Cabriolet (from 2003)

**Number of members:** approx. 170

**Beneficial effects on SME´s**

Especially supporting SME´s to cooperate with big suppliers in the automotive sector like Magna

**Cross border cooperation**

The ACstyria is establishing now the “South-East European Network on Automotive Industries”. Therefore, the ACstyria is rather active in cross border contacts/ projects.

The following projects of the ACstyria could be mentioned in this field:

Project CISTA

Establishing business contacts in the automotive sector with Bosnia and Romania.

Project SENAI

Establishing business contacts in the automotive sector with Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia

Project VIP

Giving Consultancy to establish an automotive Cluster in Vojvodina/ Serbia

**SFG involvement within this cluster**

SFG owns 26% of the cluster.

## WoodCluster Styria



### **Goal:**

Harnessing and working timber and wood, the raw material, in innovative applications

<http://www.holzcluster-steiermark.at/>

### **Focus:**

innovative wood construction

### **Points of contact to:**

paper industry, plant construction, furniture and energy supply

**Membership:** 134

### **Beneficial effects on SME's**

The wood cluster consists mainly on SME's.

### **Cross border cooperation**

The wood cluster has rather good contacts to the neighbouring countries of Austria (Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Hungary) and also some common projects with countries of former Ex- Yugoslavia.

### **SFG involvement within this cluster**

SFG owns 26% of the cluster

## Material Cluster



### **Goal:**

Acts as platform and innovation mainspring for partners in the field of materials whereby all sections/industries in Styria are represented

<http://materialcluster.at>

### **Focus:**

metals, synthetics, ceramics, oxidic materials, compounds

### **Partners:**

ape - advanced polymer engineering GmbH,  
IB Steiner, Joanneum Research Forschungs GmbH, MCL, PlanTech Prototypenbau,  
RPD - Rapid Product Development GmbH,  
MUL Außeninstitut, ZAT Leoben GmbH,  
ÖGI - Österreichisches Gießerei - Institut,  
SimCat Technologies

### **Beneficial effects on SME´s**

The materials sector is mostly dominated by bigger companies. The cluster has the main aim to develop a research- driven cluster for SME´s in the field of materials.

### **Cross border cooperation**

Project KOSS

Development of a network between Slovenian and Styrian tool and tie making companies

Project CEXIM Plast

Development of a network on mould injection together with Slovenia, Croatia, Poland and Slovakia

**SFG involvement within this cluster**

SFG owns 51% of the cluster.

**human.technologie.styria** **Goal:**

<http://www.human.technologie.at>



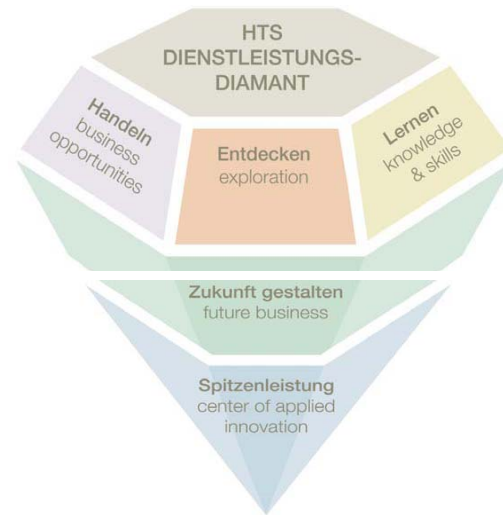
Project development company for the setting up of a cluster in the field of medicine -, bio- and pharmaceutical technologies for the cross-linking of research and economics as well as for the strong positioning of Styrian competences on international level.

**Number of potential member companies and institutions:** approx. 200

**Partners:** 41

**Beneficial effects on SME´s**

The SME get support in the cluster amongst the “diamond strategy” of the cluster. This means support in:



### **Cross border cooperation**

The human technology cluster is not directly involved in bilateral- cross sectorial- cluster cooperations in the border region.

### **SFG involvement within this cluster**

SFG owns 100% of the cluster.

Eco & Co



**Goal:**

Research and development of alternative energy and merging of companies in ecological engineering to form a cluster

<http://www.ecoundco.at>

**Focus:**

strengthen the fields within the range renewable energies, effective constructing and refloating, environmental technologies etc.

**Number of member companies and institutions:** approx. 504

**Beneficial effects on SME´s**

The Eco-cluster has mainly SME´s as partners within the cluster. There are two different ways of being a cluster member, either a full membership or a “light” membership.

**Cross border cooperation**

The eco- cluster is not directly involved in bilateral cooperations in the border region.

**SFG involvement within this cluster**

SFG owns 74% of the cluster.

**TechforTaste**



**Goal:**

Promotion of Research and development in the field of food technology

<http://www.techfortaste.at>

**Focus:**

strengthen the fields food and food technology in Styria

**Number of member companies and institutions:** appr. 10

**Beneficial effects on SME's**

Focuses mostly on SME's

**Cross border cooperation**

The cluster is not involved in bilateral cooperations yet.

**SFG involvement within this cluster**

SFG owns 100% of the cluster.

**Creative Industries Styria  
GmbH**

**Goal:**

Set up of a network within the creative industries in Styria

[www.design-in-gruen.at](http://www.design-in-gruen.at)



**DESIGN in GRÜN**

**Focus:**

strengthen the creativity within all sectors/industries

**Number of member companies and**

**institutions:** the cluster is just about to start

**Beneficial effects on SME´ s**

SME´ s are in the focus of the network

**Cross border cooperation**

The cluster is not involved in international activities yet

**SFG involvement within this cluster**

SFG owns 100% of the cluster.