

## More Eco-Innovation & Technology Combinations

### New challenges in the environmental technologies sector

The current environmental situation and climate change require the comprehensive introduction of clean and environmentally friendly innovations. Environmental protection has become a major growth market worldwide. However, environmental technologies ensure not only the quality of life and the environment, but also increase the potential of employment. Great opportunities result from the innovations of environmental and energy technologies as well as in the expansion of energy and resource efficiency. Eco-innovation is thus a key to the short-term improvement of the economic situation and to an ecological and socially sustainable growth. European innovation policy therefore aims at shifting to a knowledge-based and resource-conserving economy, as well as sustainable, seminal economic growth that includes a high degree of environmental protection. The comprehensive concept of eco-innovation is focused on challenges and opportunities for the realization of environmental objectives through innovation. Eco-innovation is therefore a key component of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

\* Eco-innovation is regarded as any form of innovation that creates or aims for substantial and demonstrable progress towards achieving the goal of sustainable development by reducing environmental impacts, increasing resilience against environmental impacts, or creating a more efficient and responsible use of natural resources.

#### ***Austrian FTI strategy***

Austria's development in research and innovation policies are in line with the strategic reorientations at the European level. With its strategy for research, technology and innovation (FTI strategy), the Federal Government makes a clear commitment to the promotion of research, technology and innovation and its framework conditions. The aim is to find answers to the major challenging tasks, such as climate change and associated threats, the global shortages of energy and natural resources, or the transition to new and renewable resources.

#### ***Growth market environmental technology***

Today, Austria's environmental technology industry (especially the production segment) is one of the most innovative in the world and is growing faster than the domestic economy as a whole. The turnover of Austrian environmental technology companies (excluding service providers) has quintupled since 1993. In 2011, sales of over 8 billion euros were generated, of which three quarters came from export. Sales grew by 8% per year between 2007 and 2011, while employment rose by 6.5% per year. The proportion of sales revenues has risen, and providers are increasingly active in the markets outside Europe. The environmental and energy policy framework are important for companies in order to provide a stable yet ambitious environment for the development of environmental technologies and to enable

successful market launch and diffusion (Wifo 2013). The strong export orientation of the industry has also been confirmed in a sample survey of environmental technology 2015 (Statistik Austria 2015). In almost all environmental technology sectors exports rose from 2013 to 2014.

### ***Ambitious environmental legislation as a success factor***

Many companies report that an ambitious environmental legislation at EU level and in Austria are important enablers for their success as they contribute to the creation of a corresponding market (WIFO 2013). Extensive training and further education programs increase the qualification level in environmental technology and lead to competitive advances. This also applies to the Export Initiative environmental technology of the BMLFUW, in cooperation with the Austrian Economic Chamber. ([Www.bestofaustria.at](http://www.bestofaustria.at))

### ***Automation and digitization as an opportunity***

Many social and economic areas such as service, production and logistics systems are characterized by strong automation and digitization based on the evolving possibilities of information and communication technologies. Extensive innovations can also be expected in areas that are currently characterized by high energy and resource use: in the area of energy systems (smart energy), traffic systems (smart traffic), building management, individual housing situations (smart homes), in urban development (Smart City, Shared City) as well as in the production sector. These innovations can offer opportunities to increase efficiency. However, the effects on the environment and employment can not yet be assessed systematically and comprehensively.

### ***Bioeconomy of the future***

In the bioeconomy, non-renewable resources are replaced by renewable resources throughout the economic cycle. This affects the entire production and economic system from the basic raw material to the final product. In the work program of the Austrian Federal Government 2013-2018 (BKA 2013) bioeconomy is mentioned as an important research initiative.

### ***Sharing Economy supports transformation***

In terms of resource conservation and re-use, the sharing economy can contribute significantly to a transformation of the economic and social system. This results in specificities and challenges regarding the maintenance of existing work and social standards and the rebound effect. Austrian companies already occupy an excellent position in the environmental and energy technology sector today and score high-quality products and systems. The development of technological innovations in this field is a key factor for a resource-efficient and life-cycle-oriented economy. As a future model, the Austrian environmental technology sector creates jobs, strengthens the Austrian competitive position and contributes to a Austria worth living.

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