„How to strengthen the effectiveness of regional governance in Austria?“

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Context matters! -> Which regional level?
Austria - A Federal State with 9 Provinces/Länder
Co-operation of Local Action Groups (EU-LEADER-Programme)
Regional management structures (Steyr-Kirchdorf)

3 Bezirke: Kirchdorf an der Krems
   Steyr-Land
   Steyr Stadt

43 Gemeinden

155,000 Einwohner
Co-operation in City Regions (e.g. Upper Austria)
Project: „To Strengthen the Effectiveness of Regional Governance in Austria“ - Masterplan for rural areas

- Stock-taking of good practice
- Success factors – Common understanding at national level
- Top-down framework conditions
- The role of EU programmes 2021-2027
- Vertical cooperation on topics of the future
- How to design a national governance system aiming for enhancing the effectiveness of regional governance?
Widening MLG-system for small scale regional governance is essential for effective policy implementation

This is the level where....

• **Top-down** strategies and **Bottom up** development perspectives meet

• **Policy integration** across sectors and levels happens – beyond sectoral silos

• **Functional co-operation** across administrative borders and across constitutional competences close to the citizens needs and expectations is established

• **Tailor-made solutions** can be found for the respective regional context

• **Regional embeddedness** of sectoral policies can be better secured

• **Community and citizen engagement** can be organized best

• **Possible conflicts of interest** can be identified and mediated at an early stage
There are good reasons for the tourism business to engage in regional development

- Regions are not only destinations but living space for residents
  „What is good for residents is good for visitors“ (Huete)

But: this does not necessarily hold true the other way round without engagement of the tourism sector in regional development processes
Some of the good reasons:

• **(Touristic) infrastructure development** shall cover needs of both stakeholder groups

• **Tourism assets are not provided for granted**: untouched landscape, cultural assets, ecosystem, accessibility, human capital development, etc. deserve joint planning efforts and engagement

• **Sustainable and responsible Tourism** requires the integration of the local tourism sector into the regional business cycle, exploitation of regional value chains, short supply chains, participation in regional energy supply systems ...

• **New and growing groups of customers** in search for authentic experience, sustainable tourism products, unspoiled nature...

• Making **best use of spill over benefits** but also as **early warning for negative external effects** (eg. mobility)
To sum up:

„There is no smart tourism destination strategy without proper embeddedness in smart (and small scale) regional governance systems“
Success factors for regional governance`s effectiveness

- **Clarity about tasks, roles/competences and issues**: Linking strategic work with immediate operational implementation
- **High commitment**: Involvement of relevant stakeholder, focus on challenges and solutions
- **Respect and Empathy**: Cooperation „on an equal footing“ across levels of government and between sectors
- **High planning reliability**: Stability and continuity of framework conditions for integrated territorial approaches at regional level
- **Balancing interests**: Compromise culture taking into account both the need for individual benefits of cooperation and overall regional value-added
- **Professionalism**: Sufficient resources for operational work at regional level, modern management culture
- **Longer-term perspective**: Stability and continuity going beyond cycles of government and programmes
Thank you!

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