

## AUSTRIA

# Diversification & job creation

### Location

Zeltweg

### Programming period

2014 – 2020

### Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local  
Development

### Measure

M19 - LEADER/CLLD

### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 465 340.82

EAFRD 148 909.06

National/Regional 37 227.27

Private 279 204.49

### Project duration

2016 – 2018

### Project promoter

Industrie- und  
Wirtschaftsentwicklung  
Murtal Murau GmbH

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The 'Kraft Das Murtal' is an economic network of businesses aiming to identify and support the business potential of the region and contribute to its further development.

## Summary

The 'Kraft Das Murtal' is an economic network of large enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises, one-person companies and institutional organizations of the Upper Styria West region. More than 80 companies participate in the network. The initiative aims to identify and support the business potential of the region and contribute to its further development.

The initiative is build around several different modules supporting a wide range of activities including offering interesting job opportunities to young people; fostering cooperation between businesses by establishing new possibilities to cooperate with each other; elaborating a regional development plan to help identify new needs, image development, promotion and communication activities, etc.



## Results

Increased popularity of regional companies;

Informed young people about job prospects within the region;

Rebranded local companies as attractive employers;

Intensified cooperation between local businesses;

Created added value for the region;

Supported local entrepreneurship.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The initiative can only be successful when each partner company is fully committed to the project and is actively taking part in a variety of activities.
- ❑ The business to business network structure appears to be a successful model to promote the development of the economic activity in a region.
- ❑ A key success factor was to assign tutors for each subproject who guarantee that all aspects of the work are taken into consideration and activities are well organized and implemented.
- ❑ It is a significant challenge to consolidate the diversity of interests of the different partner companies.

## Context

The initiative 'Kraft. Das Murtal' is based on the fact that the development of the Murtal region is strongly connected to the development of local businesses. Moreover, the development of a region can only be realized by combining the interests of all important players, one of them is the local business community. In this framework the initiative acts as an interface between companies, public administration and policy makers to promote regional development.

An important element of the network's activities in order to maintain the development process is to monitor and evaluate their progress towards the priority targets continuously. Another important point is to raise awareness within of local business community to the important role they are playing in developing a more favorable job environment for the area, thus reversing the negative demographic trend for the better.

## Objectives

The overarching aim of this project is to improve the living and economic conditions in the region "Murau & Murtal". Specific objectives are to:

- establish a future-oriented image for the business community in the region;
- accelerate and intensify regional business cooperation;
- promote the local business community as attractive employers;
- strengthen the regional and social responsibility of the local business community;
- identify new opportunities for businesses with a focus on sustainable business growth;
- Reversing the negative demographic trends.

## Activities

The project is composed by modules with different priorities:

**"Human Factor"** - This module focusses on young people in order to keep them in the region. For this purpose it supports them in job finding and it also provides them with education possibilities. Activities organised include events such as "Hands-on-Business," "Power Workshops", etc.

**"Business Networking and Entrepreneurship"** The project facilitates networking between different businesses and economic sectors e.g. big companies and SMEs, sole proprietors including craftsmen, the service sector, research and development, etc. Through networking activities such as business ideas contests the project encourages creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation particularly among younger workforce to stimulate local businesses.

**"Region and Location"** Activities to support local development are supported. The projects supported the elaboration of a regional development strategy, which helps to identify local needs.

**"Communication"** This module has been designed to provide support for marketing activities for local businesses. Well-defined public relations strategies help local businesses to be perceived as attractive employers since they consider on the needs of employees with regard to job development and training, health support, compatibility between family and work life. Such an activity organises was the "Open door days" for regional companies.

All activities, milestones and individual successes are communicated and presented to the general public. Different pre-defined target groups help the project holders to monitor and analyse any actions undertaken as public relations activities.



## Main Results

### “Human Factor (focus on young people)”

- Helped young people with their job selection;
- Created awareness on the local strengths and job opportunities;
- Increased popularity of regional companies;
- Informed about job prospects within the region;
- Positioned local companies as attractive employers;
- Included input from young employees working at partner companies into future-relevant activities.

### “Business networks and entrepreneurship”:

- Intensified regional business cooperation;
- Created added value for the region;
- Supported local entrepreneurship;
- Set impulses to attract more start ups;
- Triggered and supported creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation within young people;

### “Region and Location”:

- Coordinated regional stakeholders with regard to further development of the region (i.e. education, infrastructure, economic area and living environment);
- Increased support for location development;

- Local companies resumed social and regional responsibility.

### “Image-Improvement & Communication Strategy”:

- Established a more future-orientated image of the local business community;
- Increased the popularity of the initiative itself and the local companies.

## Key lessons

The network is based on the active commitment of all the local companies. Such an initiative can only be successful when each partner company is fully committed to the project and is actively taking part in a variety of activities.

The business to business network structure appears to be a successful model to promote the development of the economic activity in a region.

A key success factor was to assign tutors for each subproject who are representatives of one of our partner companies. They serve as project coordinators for bigger projects, i.e. they guarantee that all aspects of the projects are taken into consideration and activities are well organized and implemented.

Another significant challenge was to consolidate the diversity of interests of the different partner companies.

*‘Kraft. Das Murtal started in 2009, this is a follow-up project. Meanwhile the business community network has grown from formerly 10 to now 87 companies. At the beginning bigger industrial companies got engaged with the network. By now it has become a very heterogeneous network with companies from different sizes and branches. This positive development speaks for itself.’*

Project stakeholder



## Additional sources of information

[www.facebook.com/kraft.dasmurtal/](http://www.facebook.com/kraft.dasmurtal/)