



Federal Ministry  
Republic of Austria  
Education, Science  
and Research

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# 9th Week of Innovative Regions in Europe WIRE

4-6 July 2018, Innsbruck, Tyrol

Smart Choices for innovative regional ecosystems:

**The Power of Connectivity, Entrepreneurship and Science & Research**



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[www.wire2018.eu](http://www.wire2018.eu)

*Conclusions online!*

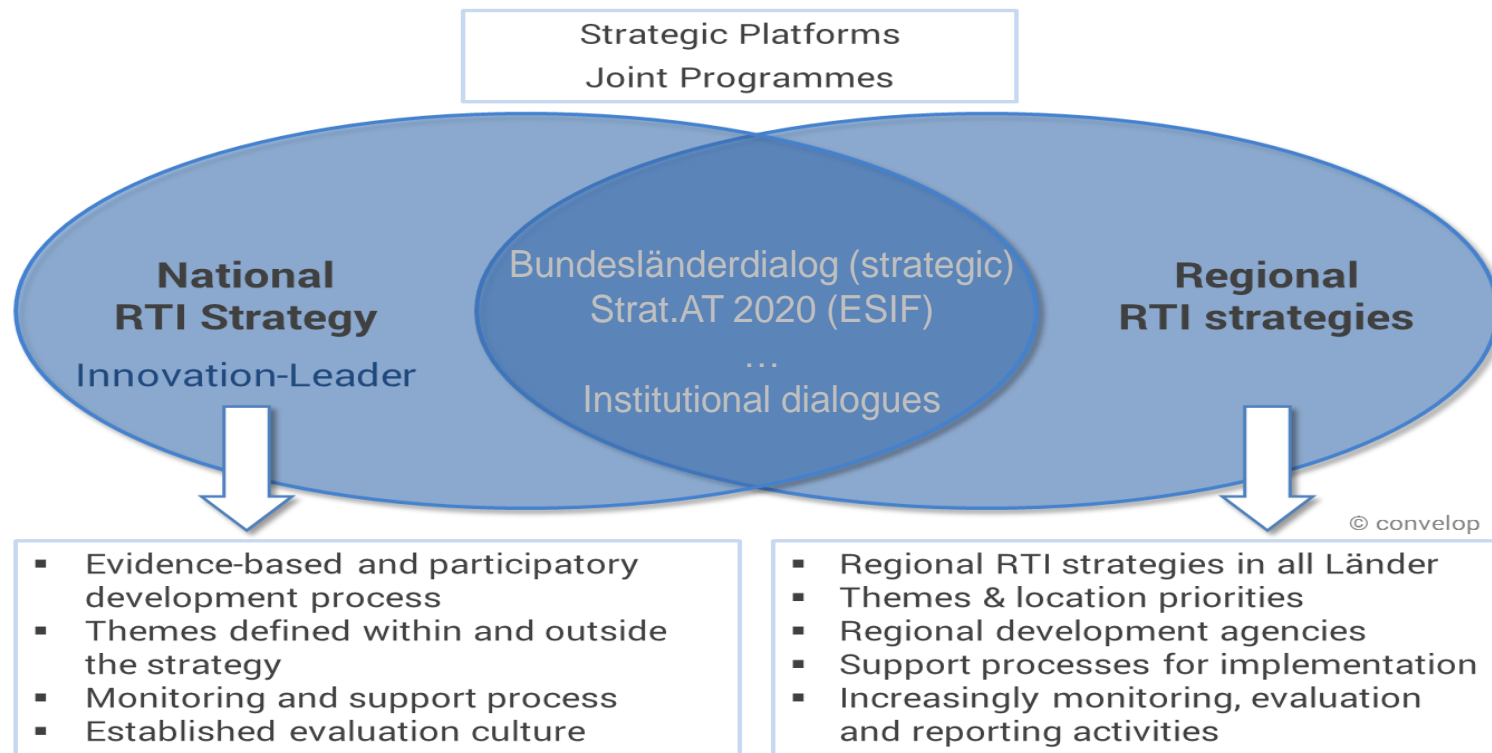
# The Lead Institutions Initiative:

## Smart specialisation for internationally visible knowledge places

Smart specialisation (RIS3): European workshop on universities as regional  
lead institutions, 13 November 2018, Graz

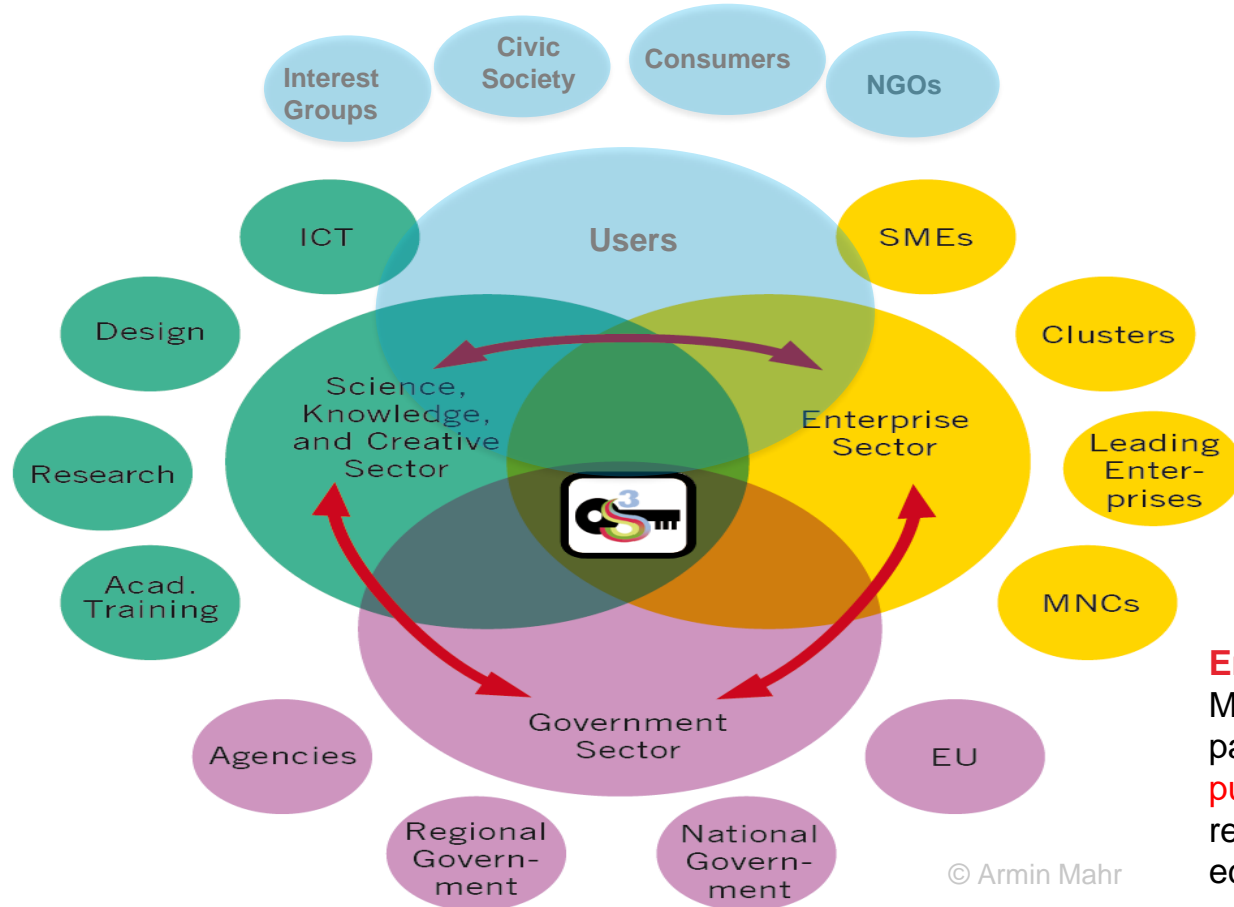
Armin Mahr  
Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research BMBWF

# Policy framework for Smart Specialisation in Austria



# Smart specialisation: Mobilising partners

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**Entrepreneurial discovery:**  
Mobilising the expertise of all partners helps to set the **right public investment priorities** for regional innovation ecosystems.

# Lead Companies

- **Significance:** Entrepreneurial drivers of their region, market or branch (innovators, agents of structural change)
- **Sustainability** in management
- **Responsibility:** Inclusion of societal and regional / environmental targets in the entrepreneurial portfolio

In some EU countries, there are schemes that award companies with the Lead Company seal (DE, AT: ‚Leitunternehmen‘ / ‚Leitbetrieb‘).



# Lead Institutions

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- **Significance:** Entrepreneurial drivers of their region, pushing knowledge production and frontiers, lighthouses of the innovation eco-system and of structural change
- **Sustainability:** HEI and PRI are established to last, and to produce public goods.
- **Responsibility:** Research, education and engagement as defined and accepted missions

Universities / knowledge institutions are **Lead Institutions** by nature/law. Role acceptance and empowerment are key.



**HEI in Austria**



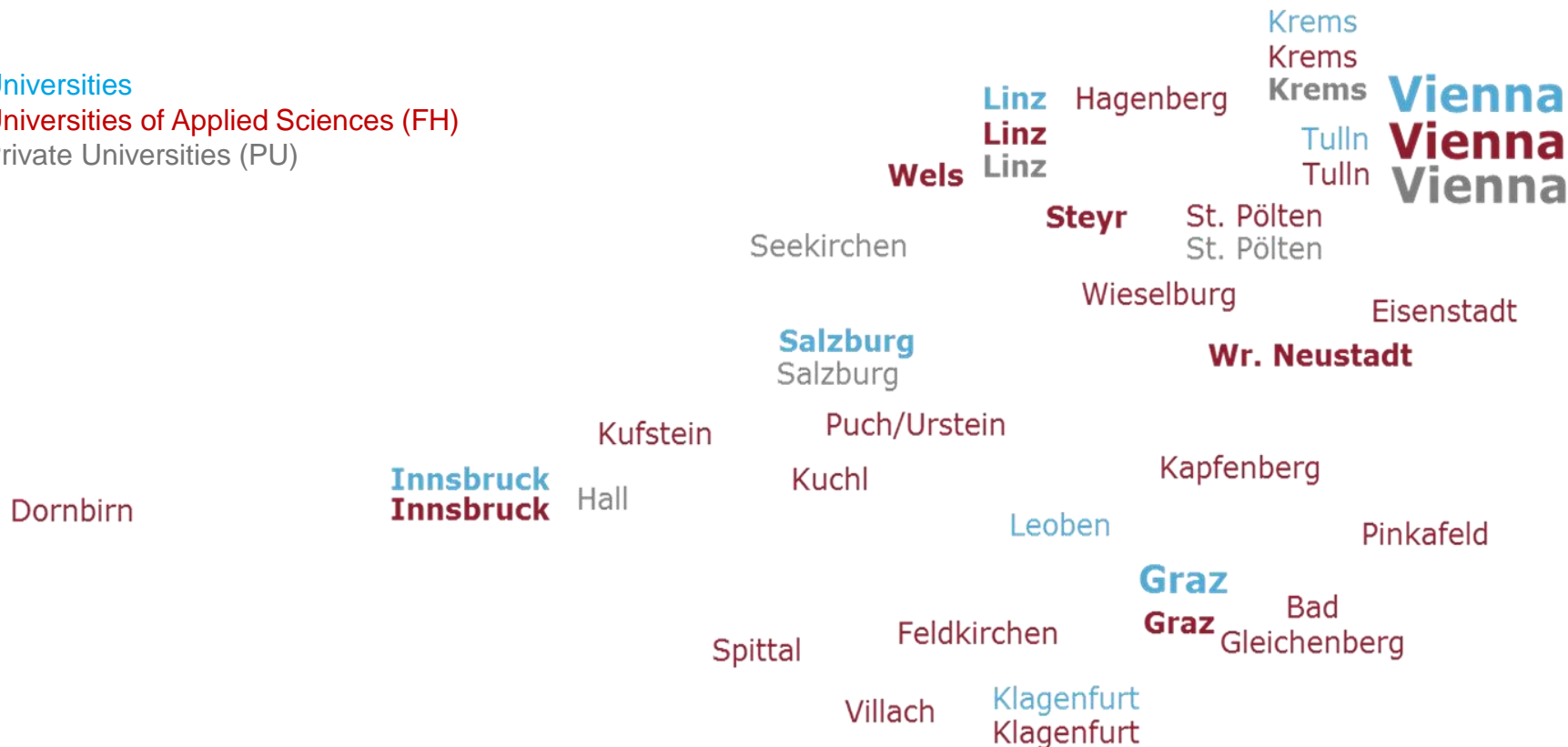
# Regional distribution of HEI in Austria

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Universities

Universities of Applied Sciences (FH)

Private Universities (PU)



# The Lead Institutions Initiative: Universities & smart specialisation

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- Connecting universities with & in their regions
- Developing competitive knowledge places with an international profile
- Empowerment of strategic capacity as international co-operation hubs
- Creating synergies through co-ordination (thematic/location related approaches)
- Planning shift from a mere institutional to a location or even regional cluster perspective

# The Lead Institutions Initiative: Moving targets in 3 succeeding performance agreements

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## PA 2013-15: Towards regional awareness

- **Location Concepts** (connected with a university's Development Plan)
- Active contribution to the regional RIS3

## PA 2016-18: Towards more regional alignment & joint communication

- Location concepts update, using regional HEI conferences to develop *joint* location concepts
- Reaching out to other PR/HEI in the region, using the concept to communicate the regional knowledge profile

## PA 2019-21: Towards more focused, place-based investments

- Aligning public investment, using synergies from joint infrastructures, administrations, services and communication of strengths

# The Lead Institutions Initiative: Moving targets in 3 succeeding performance agreements

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## PA 2013-15: Towards regional advancement

- **Location Concepts** (connected)
- Active contribution to the

## PA 2016-18: Towards more regional engagement

- Location concepts update, using location concepts
- Reaching out to other PR/HEI in the regional knowledge profile

## PA 2019-21: Towards more focus on excellence

- Aligning public investment, using administrations, services and co

In a **Location Concept** ('Standortkonzept') universities highlight their position within a network of strategic partners in academia, industry and business in a self-chosen radius of close collaboration.

*"A Location Concept is a university's bridge from local engagement to global competitiveness."*

Presenting a clustered innovation ecosystem or a critical mass of excellence rather than a single institution should support attracting international co-operations and investments.

**„SMART POLICY SCHEME‘ nomination 2014**



# University Governance: Planning instruments hard/negotiated/soft, national/clustered/institutional

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- Universities Act, new university funding system: legal
- **Performance agreements**: negotiated planning & dialogue
- **Development plans**: central institutional strategy document
- Internationalisation strategy, **location concept**: institutional
- **National Development Plan for Public Universities (2019-25)**: national template
- Joint planning documents for buildings, infrastructure etc.

*To date, the Lead Institutions Initiative has used negotiated governance instruments (,strategic encouragement') rather than financial incentives/ restrictions.*

# Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2019-24

## **Objective 6d: *Align knowledge locations with an international profile***

***Location matters.*** Universities are important partners in making Austria an internationally competitive place to create knowledge and innovation. Universities also draw crucial momentum for their own priority setting from local partnerships; and research, teaching and universities' local engagement also always have an impact in the specific urban and regional ecosystems context (European concept of smart specialisation).

# Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2019-24 – Objective 6d

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*Enshrining that objective in the development plans of the 22 public universities should help to*

- *position universities as **lead institutions** that, together with industry and society, shape the development of locations and regional ecosystems for innovation (e.g. through helping to generate findings and innovations),*
- *position universities as **international partners with a strong local network**,*
- *effect a **change in perspective** from a purely institutional viewpoint **towards the development of knowledge locations with internationally recognised profiles**,*
- *justify public investments through prior **place-based co-ordination and alignment** in academic research, teaching, management and services.*

# Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2019-24 – Objective 6d


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Action	Institution responsible	Implementation	Time frame
<p>Create knowledge locations with international profiles through place-based alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing synergies by establishing or using regional coordination structures between higher education institutions within the location</li> <li>- Strategic positioning as a regional lead institution in the university development plan and in the performance agreement</li> <li>- Documentation of progress towards joint priority setting and coordination within the location (research, teaching, management and services), including this in development plans and performance agreements as a basis for investment planning (see objective 1a, 2b, 6b)</li> </ul>	<p>Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research</p> <p>Universities</p> <p>Knowledge locations (higher education conferences)</p> <p>Cities and states</p>	<p>Performance agreement</p> <p>Location concepts and development plans</p>	ongoing



# Universities are Lead Institutions of their regions.

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[www.bmbwf.gv.at](http://www.bmbwf.gv.at) – The Ministry

[www.era.gv.at/regions](http://www.era.gv.at/regions) - Smart specialisation!

[www.eu2018.at](http://www.eu2018.at) – The EU Council Presidency



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