Realising the transformative potential of enterprise policy: An appraisal of the Austrian policy mix

How does the Austrian Federal Government’s enterprise policy mix affect the net-zero performance of firms?

Step 1: Delineating the policy mix

Governance level: Federal Government
Geography: Austria
Timeframe: March 2023 – February 2024
Thematic scope: all policies targeting enterprises that affect their net-zero performance

Step 2: Developing a transformative policy framework

Synthesis of 17 existing frameworks

10 approaches how policy can bring about transformative change towards climate-neutrality

1) Reorienting towards a climate-neutral economy
2) Ensuring a socially inclusive and just transition
3) Shifting to transformative governance arrangements
4) Creating favourable market environments
5) Investing in infrastructures for climate-neutrality
6) Building competitive environmental goods and services industries
7) Stimulating eco-entrepreneurship
8) Fostering the adoption of low-carbon alternatives
9) Creating spaces for experimentation and collaboration
10) Supporting businesses in reducing their carbon footprints

Assessment criteria: comprehensiveness, consistency, coherence, stability

Step 3: Data collection

Interviews with 17 civil servants and policy experts
Database of 379+ policy instruments
Codings: instrument type, purpose, scope, governmental body, year of implementation, target groups

Step 4: Analysis (validation stage)

Figure: Quantitative analysis of how enterprise policies seek to engender transformative change

Preliminary findings

➢ Austrian enterprise policy is highly fragmented and lacks mechanisms for cross-governmental coordination
➢ A sectoral logic (mobility, energy) predominates in policy design for different target groups; little differentiation in terms of strategic orientations, business sectors, climate footprint, organisational form
➢ Policies for just transition processes and eco-entrepreneurship are strongly underrepresented
➢ Few policies for integrated approaches to climate-neutrality in firms
➢ No coherent framing across policies: SDGs, Green Deal, ESG – explicit focus on climate-neutrality is rare

What next?

Identification of target groups: large-scale questionnaire survey and cluster analysis
Stakeholder and expert workshops: developing policy mixes for each target group

About the project:
Trans4MEr: transformative SME policy for broad-based decarbonisation” (2022-2025)
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