



Association of European Border Regions  
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**Application form “AEBR-Cross Border Award” 2012**  
**Deadline: 20.09.2012**

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## **CROSS-BORDER LABOUR MARKET MOBILITY –** **EXPERIENCES, PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES**

### **1. General information**

1.1 Applicant border / cross-border region:

Upper Austria (Mühlviertel) and South Bohemia.

1.2 Title of the cross-border cooperation measure\* [project(s), programme(s) / strategy(ies)]:

**RegioTalent - Regionalisation without borders**

Creating new job opportunities and development possibilities in border regions Mühlviertel and South Bohemia

1.3 Period:

01.01.2011

30.06.2013

1.4 Lead Partner:

FH OÖ - University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria  
Research & Development Ltd.

Contact:

Mag. Tanja Peherstorfer

1.5 Partners:

Project partner CZ

University of Economics, Prague  
Faculty of Management, Jindřichův Hradec

Contact:

Ing. Jan Nový

Strategic partner AT

Upper Austria Regional Management (RMOÖ)  
Upper Austria Economic Chamber (WKOÖ EU+)  
Upper Austria Public Employment Service (AMS)

Strategic partner CZ

Economic chamber, Jindřichův Hradec  
Employment office, České Budějovice  
EUROREGIO Silva Nortica  
EUREGIO Šumava

#### 1.6. Financing of the cross-border cooperation measure (e.g. INTERREG):

RegioTalent is co-financed by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the state Upper Austria. The project is implemented within the funding program European Territorial Co-operation Austria – Czech Republic 2007-2013.

#### 1.7 Links to other projects, measures and/or programmes (only if applicable):

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## 2. Contents

### 2.1 Objectives of the cross-border cooperation measure:

The potential of a region is no longer exclusively defined by the physical resources of a region. In fact the human capital (talent) influences to a large part the value or worth of a region. Thus, successful regions are those regions which are able to attract qualified people not only to live in the region but also to work there and to invest their talent into the further development of the region.

Regarding the situation in the border region Upper Austria (Mühlviertel) and South Bohemia, people are leaving the region because of lacking job and development opportunities. Regional enterprises struggle with a growing talent-shortage, a loss of resources in terms of knowledge, expertise or even innovation potential. Therefore the focus of RegioTalent is to find a way to attract people to stay in the border region and to make their qualification available for this area.

RegioTalent tries to meet this challenge by focusing on two main objectives:

- ☐ Enhancing the quality of living in the region.
- ☐ Enhancing the quality of working in the region.

Working and living cannot be seen as autonomous indicators but as two system elements which are mutually dependent. Our job gives us the opportunity to use our talents and to find spirit and purpose in our work. This feeling of purpose influences to a large part our quality of living respectively our feeling of well-being.

The condition precedent to realize the defined objectives is to know more about the criteria of 'good life' and 'good work'. Thus, RegioTalent focuses on following aims:

- ☐ Gaining knowledge about the quality of living in the border region Mühlviertel and South Bohemia.
  - ◆ Implementation of a '**Quality of Life Index**'.
- ☐ Gaining knowledge about the available talents (qualified people with ideas).
  - ◆ Implementation of a '**Talent Map**'.

Based on this knowledge two pilot projects are implemented in the border region aiming at:

- ☐ Offering facilities to enhance regional and cross-border innovation and entrepreneurship, connecting talents and ideas.
  - ◆ Implementation of a cross-border training course '**Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel – Südböhmen**'.
- ☐ Raising awareness of the potential of the labour market (Mühlviertel - South Bohemia), connecting employers and employees.
  - ◆ Implementation of an '**Employer Branding**' strategy.

### 2.2 Organisational structure and activities to implement the objectives (e.g. joint secretariat, contract, etc.):

RegioTalent is implemented as a cross-border cooperation project between the Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences (FH OÖ) and the University of Economics, Faculty of Management, Jindřichův Hradec (VSE). The defined activities are implemented by a project team consisting of five representatives from Austria (FHOÖ) and four representatives from South Bohemia (VSE). Considering regional specifics, raising awareness in the region and successfully embedding the project in the region is a huge challenge. Thus, the RegioTalent project team has been expanded by a choice of strategic partners (see list above), representing the economy, the labour market, and the regional market. These partners offer the project team a helpful guidance to implement following activities:

- ☐ Quality of Life Index

Based on a qualitative survey in the region Mühlviertel – South Bohemia, collecting information about the criteria of 'good life', a quantitative questionnaire was developed. Using this questionnaire, 500 inhabitants of Mühlviertel and 500 inhabitants of South Bohemia, focusing especially on the border communities, were polled. Based on the results a 'quality of life index' will be developed, showing the current situation concerning working, living, social structures, infrastructure and the quality of life in total.

#### ☐ Talent Map

The representation of the creative and innovative potential of the border region Mühlviertel and South Bohemia is supported by a 'talent map'. This map shows the strength of the border region in terms of skilled people, existing projects, initiatives, networks or social businesses. The 'talent map' is a helpful tool to connect people with ideas in order to jointly develop new projects or services for the region. Special emphasis will be placed on possible cross-border co-operations.

#### ☐ Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel – Südböhmen

Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel - Südböhmen is a training concept which supports people to realize ecological, social responsible and innovative projects for the border region. Precondition to attend this training course is a project idea which focuses on the border region and which is established in the field of social innovation. This training course lasts one year. Within this year the 'pioneers' are not only trained to realize a project idea or even to build one's own business, but they also get personal training. This training concept is established in both border regions. Joint training lessons, the exchange of lecturers and best practices between Austria and Czech Republic should support cross-border co-operation and tolerance on both sides. Prejudices and imaginary borders which still exist should be suspended due to joint learning and doing.

#### ☐ Employer Branding

There definitely exists a labour resp. job market in the region. In fact, people living in the region are often not aware of the regional job possibilities. Regional enterprises perform on the international market but often forget to present on the regional market. Consequently, people often do not even know the enterprises which are located near to their home. Those 'unknown' companies are more confronted with skilled worker shortage than any other regional player. Within RegioTalent an employer branding strategy, which should help companies, located in the border area, to professionally appear on the regional market, is implemented. Word-of-mouth recommendation and talent management are among others the concepts we are focusing on.

### 2.3 How far has the cooperation measure been implemented?

Quality of Life Index: The index will be available in December 2012 ([www.regiotalent.eu](http://www.regiotalent.eu)).

Talent Map: The map will be available in February 2013.

Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel – Südböhmen: We are now adapting the Pioneers of Change concept to the specifics of both regions. Supported by our strategic partners we are developing strategies for a long-term establishment of this training concept in the border region. The aim is to integrate this training and cooperation facility into the future strategic development plans of both regions, thus, to establish the necessary regional roots. It is planned to start the first *Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel – Südböhmen* training in autumn 2013.

Employer Branding: At the moment we are planning the necessary activities within this second pilot project. A first cross-border exchange between enterprises of Mühlviertel and South Bohemia will take place on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2012. Within this cross-border event enterprises are invited to present their employer branding strategies and to exchange best practices. The final employer branding strategy will be finished in May 2013.

### 2.4 Special framework conditions (geographical, political, etc.)

Upper Austria has many initiatives and institutions which deal with the challenges within regional development. A wide range of successful projects were implemented within the last years. Thus, there already exists a certain awareness of the necessity of further regional development. This awareness is quite different in South Bohemia. Therefore, one of the main activities within RegioTalent is to gain public awareness. Presenting RegioTalent within local events, participation in conferences, using local media for communication, or organising regular cross-border events are used to raise consciousness.

South Bohemia as well as Mühlviertel are quite big regions, thus, the local challenges vary a lot between the different communities. Especially the communities in the border area face the problems of migration because of lacking job opportunities. Therefore the geographical focus of RegioTalent lies especially on these border communities.

### 3. **Contribution of the measure (added value) to the development of the border/cross-border region, particularly to the labour market:**

*(not more than half a page)*

Quality of Life Index and Talent Map: Both tools provide insight into the specific situation in the region in terms of living and working. The talent map is a helpful method to reveal the human potential of the regions and to offer a platform where people can get together and exchange knowledge and skills, as well as define opportunities for cross-border co-operation. The quality of life index shows the current regional situation concerning living and working. It provides a valuable basis for planning necessary development initiatives. Moreover, a regular implementation of this index (i.e. per year) illustrates the effectiveness of these initiatives and offers an opportunity for learning.

Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel – South Bohemia: This training concept supports people to realize their own project ideas or to even raise their own businesses. The parallel implementation of two trainings, one in each region, enables cross-border cooperation. This cooperation can be implemented on following levels:

- Joint project idea: A pioneer from South Bohemia cooperates with a pioneer from Mühlviertel. They conjointly work on one project idea.
- Exchange of best practices: The training concept includes at least one cross-border lecture. Within this AT-CZ training module the pioneers will exchange best practices and give the other an insight into the specifics of the respective region.
- Regional and cross-border network: In order to support the realization and the embedding of the different projects into the region, a wide choice of partners (enterprises, organisations, and initiatives) are invited to give advice to the pioneers. These partners can act as customers, mentors or even project partners. This network consists of partners of both regions. Regular cross-border events and the integration of the network into the Pioneers of Change training concept supports the development of cross-border cooperation.

Employer Branding: The developed employer branding strategy offers regional enterprises a set of methods for presenting on the regional or even on the cross-border market. These employer branding initiatives will raise awareness among regional employees about available working opportunities. Regular expert forums, where enterprises from both regions have the chance to present or to listen to best practices of employer branding, will support cross-border cooperation.

#### **4. Added value for the development of cross-border cooperation at European level**

*(not more than half a page)*

All four initiatives are well structured concepts which have been adapted to the specifics of the border region Mühlviertel and South Bohemia. The underlying concepts of these initiatives can be applied in each European border region, considering small adaptations. Examples for applying RegioTalent in a broader European context:

Quality of Life Index: The underlying questionnaire can be adapted to other European regions. Collecting and merging data of other border regions would expand the information content of the index and enable a comparison of single regions. This comparison might provide valuable information concerning necessary development initiatives on European level.

Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel – South Bohemia: Pioneers of Change has been successfully implemented in Vienna for the last three years. There already exist plans to establish this training concept in Swiss and in Germany. Thus, Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel – South Bohemia may be the fourth implementation of this concept. There already exists a huge network of Pioneers who regularly meet and exchange experiences. Making Pioneers of Change to a European initiative means to enlarge the network to a European level. The 'talent map' can be used to illustrate this network and to support European exchange and cooperation.

**5. Further annexes**                                  yes     no

Which ones?

- a) Short description of the RegioTalent and of the pilot project Pioneers of Change Mühlviertel – Südböhmen (in German).
- b)
- c)
- d)

10.10.2012

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\* A cross-border cooperation measure is given, when partners from both sides of the border participate as regards contents, organisation, staff and finances.