

Leveraging standards and trade facilitation for strong and more resilient MSMEs

Engaging SMEs in standard-setting processes

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Joanna Gajdek, Austrian Standards International

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General Information about Austria

Space: 83.882 km²

Population: 8.900.000

Population density: 106/km²

Percentage of total EU-population: 1,7 %

Percentage of EU-GDP: 2,4 %



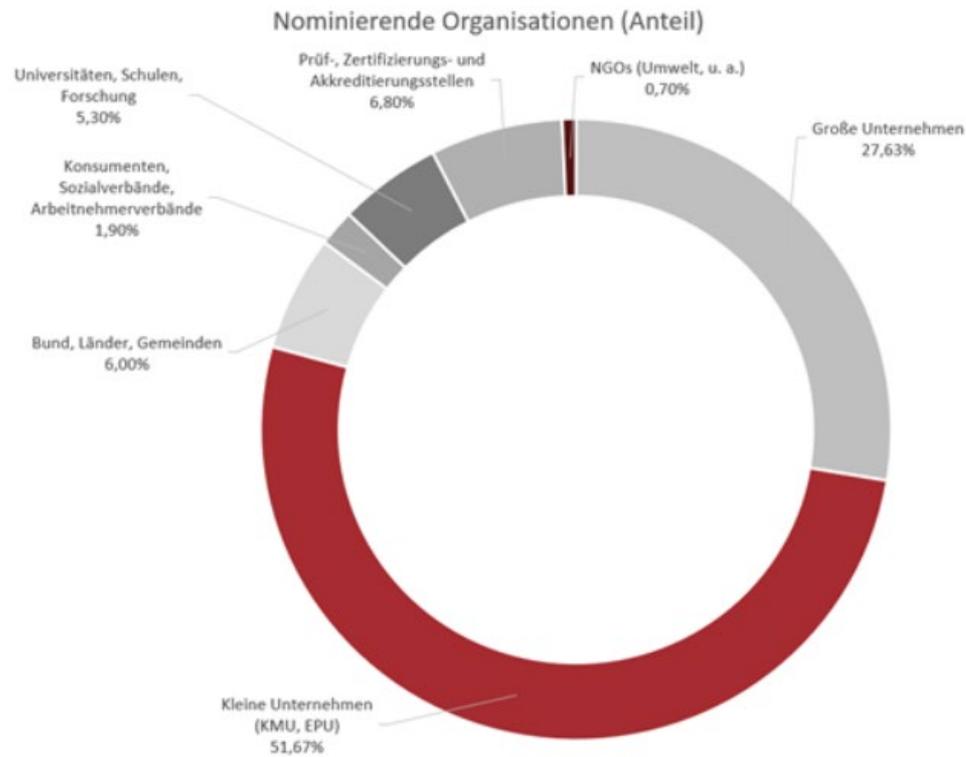
MSMEs as part of the Austrian economy

- 99% micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Out of this ca. 50 % are one-person-enterprise (micro)
- 80 % are family owned and led companies

Austrian SMEs are employers for:

- 60 % of employed population
- 70 % of trainees

SMEs involved in standards development



How Austrian Standards supports SMEs

- Information about standardization projects relevant for SMEs
- No participation fee
- Free of charge access to draft standards: viewing and commenting
- Special prices of standards and standards packages
- Co-operations with start-ups, representatives of MSMEs and universities (reading room)

How Austrian Standards supports SMEs

EU-funded Twinning co-operation

“Support to SMEs for the implementation of the New and Global Approach directives”, Poland, 2006-2008.

- Assistance to the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development and the Polish Ministry for Economic Affairs in teaching and training Polish SMEs on New and Global Approach directives as well as conformity assessment and their practical application on the company level.
- Workshops and direct consultancies for selected Polish SMEs

Example: construction sector

"when you want to grow as a medium-sized Austrian company you have to expand to other markets. Austria is too small for that. And in this context, the countries of Eastern Europe and then Russia simply were a natural choice."

Franz Bamberger Steinmetzbetriebe

- Stone masonry
- Group of 5 companies
- Around 100 employees
- Business activities in Eastern Europe and Russia already before 1989
- Today: office in Moscow, prefabricated products are still manufactured in Austria, the project supervisors are from Austria, the material itself comes from all over the world

- Started expansion on the markets in the early 1980s
- First projects funded by Kontrollbank (Hungary, Poland)
- Small companies were able to ride along as subcontractors of big Austrian construction enterprises and gained a foothold in the East

Example: construction sector – role of standards

"If you know the standards, you know what is required. Especially in economic relations with Russia, standards are of great importance. And therefore, you should get information in advance"

"The products must comply with standards there, and this has to be evidenced by certificates."

- Getting familiar with the requirements
- Obtain the relevant certificates
- Mainly Russian GOST standards, but also British standards

"If you want a globalized economy, there is no way around finding a common international language for trade. And that's what standards are."

Example: baby soothers

- Mr. Peter W. Rührig started in 1976
- aiming at combining medical competence, optimum functionality and good design in high-quality baby products

Today

- company MAM is the leading designer brand in baby care
- headquartered in Vienna, part of the MAM/BAMED Group
- around 600 employees worldwide.
- every year the group sells around 500 million premium products
- market leader in the pacifier segment in Austria, USA, Sweden, France, etc.

In addition to soothers, the product portfolio includes breastfeeding articles, bottles, cups, teethers, oral care and feeding products as well as accessories.

MAM is represented in eight international scientific and standardization committees, hosts ISO TC/SC/WG secretariats

Example: baby soothers – role of standards

- Safety is essential for baby products
- Got involved in standardization early
- MAM was one of the first enterprises in the late 1980s involved in elaboration of standards
- Austrian representative involved in work on **European standard EN 1400** "Child use and care articles - Soothers for babies and young children - Safety requirements and test methods"
- "In product development, it is always important to know where problems may arise. Working in standardization helped me very much in identifying what we did not know"
- "Those who take part in standardization have numerous advantages in competition."

Standardization as an (export) instrument for SMEs

- ... access to the documents

Austrian solution: “my standards package”

Industry solution for SMEs provides easy and inexpensive access to current standards. In line with the industry's structure and the number of relevant standards “my standards package” is tailored to the needs of your industry

- ... participation in standardization work

Mr. Martin Denison: “You should first ask whether a standard can be a solution for you or for your company. If the answer is yes, you should talk with the Austrian Standards Institute and propose a new standardisation project. Such a talk does not cost anything and participation in standardisation is also free of charge in Austria. You only have to bear your own travel expenses and time expenditure. In my case, that was really worthwhile.”

Thank you for your attention

Ms. Joanna Gajdek
Head of Consulting
Committee Manager

j.gajdek@austrian-standards.at

