

ecoplus Company History

The Development of ecoplus into The Business Agency of Lower Austria

1962: Industrial Park NÖ-South Ltd. (Industriezentrum NÖ-Süd GesmbH.):

The development of the IZ NÖ South (Industrial Park Lower Austria South) at the site of the former airplane engine manufacturer Flugmotoren Ostmark in Wiener Neudorf was begun in 1962 at the initiative of the Province of Lower Austria. This property was transferred to the Province of Lower Austria in 1959 within the framework of the transfer of former German property to the Republic of Austria, and the government management of Flugmotorenwerke Ostmark GmbH was continued until 1964 due to the difficult conditions prevailing at that time. The Province of Lower Austria assumed the shares of the company as well as an equal stake in NEWAG and NIOGAS at this time. The Province of Lower Austria then assumed full ownership in 1968. The first company to settle in the industrial center - Isovolta - came in 1962.

The administration of the company Industrial Park NÖ South Ltd. was located in the industrial park in Wiener Neudorf and in Vienna.

1972: Agency for Area Planning, Industrial Site Establishment and Structural Improvement (Raumordnungs-; Betriebsansiedlungs- und Strukturverbesserungsgesellschaft):

The Raumordnungs-, Betriebsansiedlungs- und Strukturverbesserungsgesellschaft NÖRBS was founded in 1972. This company was owned entirely by the Province of Lower Austria. The scope of activities of the company covered the establishment of company sites in Lower Austria. The company headquarters were at Stallburggasse 4, in Vienna's first district.

1982: ECOPLUS Agency for Industrial Site Establishment and Economic Development in Lower Austria Ltd. (ECOPLUS Betriebsansiedlung und Wirtschaftsförderung in Niederösterreich GesmbH.):

The Industrial Park NÖ-South Ltd. merged with NÖRBS at the end of 1982. The company name was changed to ECOPLUS Betriebsansiedlung und Wirtschaftsförderung in NIEDERÖSTERREICH Gesellschaft mbH. The company was now headquartered in IZ NÖ South, with a city office in Vienna.

1987: ECOPLUS Industrial Development and Regionalisation in Lower Austria Ltd. (ECOPLUS Betriebsansiedlung und Regionalisierung in Niederösterreich GesmbH.):

At the same time that St. Pölten was named the capital of the province, the provincial government of Lower Austria launched a comprehensive regional development program and selected ecoplus to handle the implementation. The objective of this program is the promotion of the economic, social and cultural dynamics of the regions of Lower Austria, in particular in the structurally weak regions of the province. The regional support program provides a total of ATS 500 million yearly, whereby ATS 150 million are channeled directly to the communities and ATS 350 million are invested in regional projects which meet the program guidelines. The company name was changed to "ECOPLUS Industrial Development and Regionalisation in Lower Austria Ltd." in the articles of partnership of the company in February 1987.

The activities of ecoplus were divided into three service areas:

- investment promotion
- management of business parks
- regionalisation

A new organisational body was created at the beginning of 1987 in addition to the management and supervisory board: the expert advisory committee for regionalisation issues.

The investment promotion and regionalisation are handled in the company's head office in Vienna, which was relocated to Lugeck 1/6th floor, in Vienna's 1st district, in November 1987. The company headquarters and the management of business parks are located in IZ NÖ-South.

Business Parks in Lower Austria:

ecoplus soon began to establish further business parks in Lower Austria in addition to IZ NÖ-South. This was intended to create the optimal conditions for Austrian and international companies to establish sites in the province. ecoplus Business Park Wolkersdorf in the Weinviertel region was begun in 1978 with the first project phase to the east of Europastraße 7. ecoplus Business Park Wr. Neustadt was established in 1989; the first company here was the Regional Innovation Center (RIZ). The development of the ecoplus Business Park Ennsdorf was begun in 1992. This park is particularly important due to its connection to the Danube port Enns-Ennsdorf. ecoplus has also established Business Parks in Poysdorf and Heidenreichstein in the northern part of Lower Austria. ecoplus established its seventh business park in the eastern part of Lower Austria, the ecoplus Business Park Bruck/Leitha another park was established in Marchegg.

1990: Management of Shareholdings:

In 1990, ecoplus was assigned an additional task above and beyond the management of business parks: ecoplus holds shares in companies which act as key projects in the regions and/or represent significant supplementary facilities in the ecoplus business parks. ecoplus currently holds shares in the following projects: Regional Innovation Centers Holding Company, Technology Center Wr. Neustadt, Access Industrial Park - a cross-border industrial park Austria-Czechia with the ecoplus. The Business Agency of Lower Austria Ltd.



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Enterprise Development and Innovation Center Gmünd, Danube port Enns-Ennsdorf, Residential and Industrial Park (WWE) St. Pölten, Business Park Kematen, Organisation for University Development and Controlling in Niederösterreich Ltd.

1995: Implementation of EU Regional Policy in Lower Austria:

ecoplus is responsible for key tasks in the implementation of EU regional policy in Lower Austria. The regional support program was integrated into the EU program plan for objective 2 and 5b areas in Lower Austria in 1995. The co-financing funds allow ecoplus and Lower Austria to fund more projects than was possible before. ecoplus has also begun offering increased information services on EU regional policy in Lower Austria.

The range of consulting services offered by ecoplus has also been further expanded within the framework of the EU program planning. The regional consulting division has increased its consulting activities for projects - also with EU funding for objective 5 areas.

1998: ECOPLUS The Regionale Development Agency of Lower Austria Ltd. (ECO PLUS Niederösterreichs Regionale Entwicklungsagentur GesmbH.):

The company name of ecoplus was changed to "Ecoplus The Regional Development Agency of Lower Austria Ltd." in May 1998. The company's head office is in Vienna and the company seat in Wiener Neudorf; ecoplus also has offices in the capital of Lower Austria, St. Pölten and in ecoplus Business Park Ennsdorf.

Cross-Border and Interregional Projects:

ecoplus has established a separate services area in order to promote cross-border cooperation with Austria's neighbors. ecoplus prepares expert opinions and completes studies on cross-border regional development within the framework of EU projects. Networks of experts are established to promote contacts and contact points between regional and international figures.

1999: Fitness Program for Lower Austria:

In order to strengthen Lower Austria, in particular in the regions close to the border, with a view towards the eastern expansion of the EU, ecoplus was selected to implement the funding measures of the Fitness Program for Lower Austria.

2001: ecoplus builds Clusters:

Based on its many years' experience in the development of networks and business cooperations, ecoplus has been assigned to develop clusters in Lower Austria. It is ecoplus' task to explore the issues surrounding clusters and networks for Lower Austria, to draw up

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analyses of potential and to organize the cluster and see it through its extended start-up phase.

January 2001 marked the launch of St. Pölten-based **Holz Cluster Niederösterreich**, and in July 2001, the Vienna-based **Automotive Cluster Vienna Region** was launched, which was developed together with the Wiener Wirtschaftsförderungsfonds (economic advancement fund Vienna). In fall of 2002, the **Wellbeing Cluster Lower Austria** was founded, based at the ecoplus head office in Vienna from July 2003. The **Green Building Cluster Lower Austria** was launched in July 2003 with head office in the ecoplus offices in St. Pölten.

New office in St. Pölten:

In 2001, ecoplus opened a new office in the capital of Lower Austria, in St. Pölten. The management of the timber network of Lower Austria has its seat there.

Vienna Region Cluster Hub:

ecoplus is setting up the Vienna Region Cluster Hub with the help of the Wiener Wirtschaftsförderungsfonds. Its first project is the Automotive Cluster Vienna Region.

Four Fields of Competence:

ecoplus organizes its many different tasks into four fields of competence in order to better address their clients and partners:

- Business Location
- Support to Catalytic projects
- Network- and Cluster-Building
- EU enlargement

2002: Further business parks

ecoplus is developing further business parks around the Automotive Clusters Vienna Region. The technology center Craft Center Kottlingbrunn (CCK) and the ecoplus business park Marchegg are designed to offer optimal conditions to companies in the automotive sector.

2003: Further investment management

ecoplus also collaborates with the Biotechnology Center Krems (BTZ), in the Techno-Park Tulln, with the Austrian Tissue Bank, with the GIP Projektrealisierungs Ltd. and the business park Schrems Ltd.



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2004:

New corporate design

As of March 2004, ecoplus will have a new corporate design, a new logo and a new company publication as well as a new advertising image.

Lower Austrias Business Agencies in the MOEL

January 2004 – the first ecoplus office opens up abroad in Prague managed by Eva Farkacova. The next ecoplus business agencies started their work in May; the office in Bratislava is led by Peter Slivka and the office in Budapest is supervised by Karola Bolzer.

Technopol-program 2004:

As program manager, ecoplus is responsible for the implementation of the program as commissioned by department WST 3, Lower Austria office for technology. The program started on April 1, 2004. Technology: ecoplus expands its mission - a new area of competence was added.

Centropa:

Centropa is a non-profit consulting company founded by ecoplus and Raiffeisen Landesbank Wien-Niederösterreich in December 2004. It supports domestic companies from A to Z in their market outreach to Lower Austria's neighboring countries.

2005:

Plastics-Cluster:

The Lower Austria office of the interprovincial Plastics-Cluster, located in the Technology and Research Center Wiener Neustadt (TFZ), was launched in January 2005 in cooperation with the Technology Marketing Group (TMG).

A further Lower Austrian Business Agency in the MOEL: The ecoplus office in Warschau, which is managed by Franz Rankl opens up in April.

Firm Renamed:

Reflecting its expanded mission, the firm was renamed "ecoplus. The Business Agency of Lower Austria Ltd."

New Investment:

ecoplus. Real Estate Ltd. was established with the mission of constructing commercial properties for lease.

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New program „Internationalisierung CEE“

ecoplus, as the program agency, implements the new program on behalf of the provincial government of Lower Austria and the Lower Austrian Chamber of Commerce. The start of this new program was September 2005.

2006:

ecoplus Ennsdorf office moves to Amstetten Regional Innovation Center

The Food Industry Initiative of Lower Austria: As of 12 May 2006, a new project platform for the domestic food industry came into being.

Management Shift

Following an audit carried out by the Management Zentrum St. Gallen, the path for the continued organizational development of ecoplus was jointly agreed upon. As of 1 January 2008, ecoplus will be headed by a sole Chief Executive Officer supported by three authorized signatories. The first steps in the management reorganization have already been taken: on 1 July 2006, Helmut Miernicki assumed the position of Chief Executive Officer of ecoplus. The previous Managing Directors Dr. Richard Pletzka and Dr. Ilan Knapp will remain active as Directors until the end of 2007. They will continue to oversee the implementation of the economic programs Networks & Clusters as well as Internationalization CEE.

2007

ecoplus bundles its operations into the following three divisions:

- **business locations & services**
- **projects & initiatives**
- **companies & technology**

ecoplus International

The former competence area "EU Enlargement" has now been renamed ecoplus International. The ecoplus business agencies in the CEEC countries have been reformed as ecoplus subsidiaries and are now named ecoplus International Czech Republic Ltd, ecoplus International Slovakia Ltd, ecoplus International Hungary Ltd, and ecoplus International Poland Ltd.

An additional ecoplus office has been opened abroad: in March of 2007, an ecoplus agency opened its doors in Timișoara, Romania.

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The Timber Cluster of Lower Austria and the Green Building Cluster of Lower Austria have now merged; the English designation for the new cluster, called "bau.energie.umwelt.cluster Niederösterreich," will remain Green Building Cluster of Lower Austria. The fusion of the two clusters located at the St. Pölten offices took place in May.

2008:

Management changeover

After many years of service as managing directors, both Dr. Richard Pletzka and Dr. Ilan Knapp are now leaving ecoplus. As of today, Helmut Miernicki is sole Managing Director and will be supported by three authorized signatories ("*Prokuristen*"). Authorized signatory Dr. Ernst Eder joined the management team in January 2008.

Move to the new ecoplus office at the Lower Austrian Business Center in St. Pölten

As of February 4th, 2008, ecoplus will have relocated its company headquarters to St. Pölten. All customer-oriented services as well as all company divisions will now be bundled at one location. The following other office locations are now vacated: in Vienna, Lugeck 1, 1010 Vienna; in Amstetten, the ecoplus offices in the RIZ, (Regional Innovation Center); and the former ecoplus St. Pölten office at Landhausboulevard 29-30, 3100 St. Pölten.

Start of the Logistics Cluster of Lower Austria

The chief working areas of this cluster include support of Lower Austrian companies as well as the creation of forward-looking concepts for the optimal management and development of freight traffic. Backers of this cluster are Lower Austria's Department of Business, Tourism and Technology and the Department of Transportation. Implementation will be carried out by ecoplus.

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