



The district of **Murau** is located in the centre of Austria in the province of Styria. It shares borders with the province of Salzburg in the west and Carinthia in the south. The district encompasses 35 communities with about 31 100 inhabitants on an area of 1.384 km². The population is slightly decreasing over the last decades due to the lack of adequate employment facilities. About 11% of the total labour force are engaged in farming activities on 1600 farms. About two third of them are run by part time farmers. About 25% of the farms are managed organically and most of the others

participate in the Austrian environmental program ÖPUL. The regional dairy runs organic and conventional production lines and supplies one of the major Austrian discounters with dairy products. Besides grassland based dairy farming forestry contributes to a high degree to farm income. While the agricultural sector as well as the industrial sector has decreased in importance, in recent decades the tertiary sector with tourism increased. Especially the natural park Grebenzen offers possibilities to develop forms of ecotourism in conjunction with farming. The development goals are based on the creation of trans-sectoral partnerships to increase the regional value added chains. One of the main visions for future development is the increase of renewable energy especially for heating purposes. The cooperation between major heating installation firms and farmers forms the base for the development of renewable energy systems. The energy vision includes an area covering net of bio-energy stations for heating purposes, an increase in the use of solar energy, the use of biomass for the production of electric energy and the development of a regional market for firewood and wood chips.



Supportive collaborator and local activation

The strategic direction of the regional development is discussed in the “ARGE Bioregion” which is the **supportive collaborator** for the IMALP – project. The core team of the ARGE consists out of the leaders of different working groups which deal with agriculture, economy, ecology and renewable energy. The **local activation** is guided by the “integrierte ländliche Entwicklung (ILE)” which is affiliated with the chamber of agriculture.