

# Government as a change agent towards a sustainable economy<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Many of the recent political problems like health care, migration or climate protection have a level of complexity, which makes it difficult to tackle with relying on the “normal” instruments. If we take climate protection seriously, this means that we have to perform a deep social change towards a sustainable economy.

Besides pressure factors like high oil price, regulation or subsidies, two main factors are essential: a realistic vision of an agreeable future and a network of public and private institutions, which give momentum for the change and incorporate the change.

Thus, the government grows into a new role of leadership, management and facilitation of the social change. The main key is the building and stabilisation of a inter-organisational network to include, activate and focus the different stakeholders.

The paper will show the lessons learnt in building networks which generate co-operation for climate protection analysing the example of the Austrian climate protection program klima:aktiv, which started in 2004 with the aim to change the market by introducing services together with main market players, do this in a systematic and comprehensive way for some years; provide for quality management with standards and trainings; and secure confidence in the services by public sup-

port. Thus you get climate protection together with economic success, higher quality of life and less cost for the consumer!

The paper will show the important steps in three phases of the project and will describe the main factors of success in the adventure of building a change network.

## Introduction

Many of the recent political problems like health care, migration or climate protection have a level of complexity, which makes it difficult to tackle with relying on the “normal” instruments of government, i.e. regulation, taxes and subsidies. These instruments mostly only can target few aspects of the problem. But these local, national and even worldwide problems influence society in a complex way, involving a variety of institutions, market segments, political fields. There is a lack of commonly developed strategy to tackle the problem. Thus, the government grows into a new role of leadership, management and facilitation of the social change<sup>2</sup>. It requires different co-operation formats between government, private sector and NGOs. One answer can be an integrated communicative campaign like klima:aktiv, which serves as a platform for co-operation and strategic orientation for change.

In this paper, we take the combat against climate change as an example for such a complex problem. It involves housing, transport, energy sector, production and consumption. A lot of different stakeholders are involved with different interests. The problem is a prevention problem, we have to act now to prevent

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1. This paper shows the perspective and personal views of the authors towards the project. This need not in all cases accord with the perspective of other persons participating in the process or the position of the institutions involved.

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2. Béatrice Bühlmann, Rudolf Wimmer (2007): Systemische Strategieentwicklung in organisationsübergreifenden Netzwerken, in OrganisationsEntwicklung, Zeitschrift für Unternehmensentwicklung und Change Management, Nr.3-2007.

a disaster in the future. The challenge is high. Climate change and the resource problem urge for a substantial social change towards a sustainable economy. It is also clear that it is much easier and cheaper to act now to prevent the worst, but how can this be done without the instant pressure of a crisis?

The paper will show the lessons learnt in building networks which generate co-operation for climate protection analysing the example of the Austrian climate protection program klima:aktiv, which started in 2004 with the aim to change the market by introducing services together with main market players. The main key is the building and stabilisation of an inter-organisational network to include, activate and focus the different stakeholders.

The paper starts with a short story of klima:aktiv, which explains the context of the program and the 5 main leverages of klima:aktiv. The development of the program and the main steps are explained in three phases of the project. Finally, the main factors of success in the adventure of building an inter-organisational network are resumed.

## Short story of klima:aktiv

### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF KLIMA-AKTIV

In February 1999, the Austrian Energy Agency visited the Austrian transport minister with an idea in our head and pocket, the Mobilmanager: change the market by introducing services like ecodriving or mobility management together with main market players; do this in a systematic and comprehensive way for some years; provide for quality management with standards and trainings; and secure confidence in the services by public support. Thus you get climate protection together with economic success, higher quality of life and less cost for the consumer. In essence, this is what klima:aktiv stands for now.

In Austria, time was not ripe yet for this idea. Structures and money could not be found then. But similar ideas were worked out in other areas like biomass heating or retrofitting of service buildings. The OECD as well supported the idea of governmental impulses to market transformation, and the Austrian R&D programme “Nachhaltig Wirtschaften” provided ideas to introduce new technologies into the market. The idea of the Swiss educational workman programmes (RAVEL, PACER) and the IEA’s recommendations for market transformation programmes were external inputs for the process.

All these streams gathered in the energy department of the ministry of environment. A process was started to design a market transformation program, to make it operational for action and promote it within the ministry. In 2001 the Austrian Energy Agency was asked to propose such a national climate protection initiative. In March 2002 an open space workshop with about 60 leading Austrian energy and climate protection experts took place – it took quite a while and a lot of preparatory work until the framework conditions could be finalised. The window of opportunity was opened in 2003, when it became clear that the government will allocate more money in climate protection.

Finally in 2004 the ‘umbrella program’ klima:aktiv was ready to start, it is planned to run until 2012. It is “hosted” by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water

Management, “Lebensministerium”, and managed (operational management) by the Austrian Energy Agency.

In order to foster a sustainable development of the network, starting with a clear strategy and an effective implementation process, an external consultant helped with his neutral perspective and expertise. Furthermore the consultant was responsible to help us to install a monitoring system to observe the success of the network-activities, as well as the development of the newly established management team and its strategic positioning in the complex environment between politics and economy.

In 2005, the mobility management programs of the ministry of environment joined the platform of klima:aktiv, completing the thematic portfolio.

The name klima:aktiv had been created for a training course in energy efficient building for master builders, the logo was created in a competition within a graphic school in Vienna. It symbolises the temperature scale and an active, positive approach to climate protection.

### THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM AND A NETWORK OF CHANGE

Combating climate change was seen as being costly, and being negative for both economic prosperity, and for personal quality of life. Thus there was a strong need for a positive connotation and a vision of a agreeable future, which combines prosperity and environment.

The process of changing regulation is normally is slow, especially in a federal country like Austria with strong competences of provinces concerning energy and housing. Also, the lobbying for better conditions for climate-friendly products and services is difficult unless it is co-ordinated and you recognise that the whole sector of climate industries (renewables, sustainable transport, building, efficiency) has common interests. Thus, in Austria there has been the need for a broader platform for common activities.

Austria has built up a comprehensive system of subsidies for CO<sub>2</sub>-mitigation for companies and for households in the area of renewables as well as for buildings, public transport and production processes. There are numerous subsidised projects in parallel, but there has been a lack of consistent development of the respective markets and the subsidy systems have produced a need for quality management.

In many sectors the development of technology has been very rapid. Let us take the “passive house” as an example. In Austria, within a few years this technology has emerged from an exotic niche to a important market segment. In 2009, a quarter of all new buildings in Vienna will be built in this standard. There are two prerequisite for such a development. Firstly, the stakeholders have to trust this technology and secondly, you need companies and professionals, which are able to build it. Thus, there has been a need for setting of and gaining trust into standards and for qualifying of professionals, not only in the building sector.

In Austria, a lot of different stakeholders with different activities to combat climate change have been working: federal Länder, communities, business interest groups. There was a need for a federal platform to share resources, to produce a common strategy and to build a matrix for co-operation.

## CONTEXT OF THE INSTRUMENT KLIMA:AKTIV

klima:aktiv is embedded in the Austrian federal climate strategy, consisting of a bundle of measures of regulation, taxes, subsidies. klima:aktiv has gathered all the voluntary and supporting measures under one umbrella

In the four thematic clusters Building, Energy Efficiency, Mobility, and Renewables, specific programmes are carried out by various programme managers of different elected institutions. These programmes follow a comprehensive and systematic approach in supporting the market introduction of climate-friendly technologies, services and activities.

The advantage of combining all these various topics under one umbrella programme mainly results from the fact that the instruments used - training, advising, quality management, networking and awareness campaigns - might differ in content and importance but not so much in form. Thus, the individual thematic programmes profit from each other – not only can they learn from their own mistakes but also from others. Vice-versa, success stories will quickly work a circuit and all other programmes can profit.

klima:aktiv follows the idea of market transformation. The following aspects are characteristic for this approach: market transformation is a targeted effort to change the market. In case of success market transformation is very likely to have long-lasting and far-ranging consequences and results. Typical for the market transformation approach is an active and comprehensive inclusion of all relevant market players and stakeholders. The main advantages of a market transformation approach are comparably low costs and high sustainable effects. In this case, market transformation wants to raise the share of energy efficient products and services.

## THE CORE LEVERAGES OF KLIMA:AKTIV

### Training of klima:aktiv professionals

klima:aktiv provides the qualifications needed in the thematic programmes and coordinates training and education in the various fields. The main focus is on advanced vocational training. Pilot training and seminars are initiated and introduced in the training market, in cooperation with universities, technical colleges, educational service of the chamber of commerce etc.. klima:aktiv is therefore not in competition with the educational market but acts as partner and innovation manager.

The competence partners, the klima:aktiv professionals profit from trainings and market standards: plumbers, owners of biomass plants, planners, chimney sweepers, architects, master builders, planners, energy advisers, ecodrive trainers, and mobility managers.

### Setting standards and safeguarding quality

Young and booming markets often cannot provide for quality. New companies are entering the market with low quality. Therefore, klima:aktiv focuses on safeguarding quality by

- introducing quality standards for products and services, ie. klima:aktiv house standard
- introducing quality management systems, i.e. for biomass district heating systems

- empowering consumers to check the quality of services, e.g. checklists and by
- providing handbooks and quality tools for professionals
- providing support and advise for planners, e.g. planning audits for complex solar thermal systems

### Providing Information and Raising Awareness

klima:aktiv uses a modern language. It avoids moralizing and “teaching” and wants to show the direct advantages of climate protection actions and products instead. Advertisements, articles in newspapers and specialised magazines, give-aways etc. are part of the initiative to make the brand “klima:aktiv” well-known. In June 2008, already 26% of the Austrians recognized the brand and a very positive image was attributed to it: economic, positive, modern, dynamic and ecological. This is a very good mark compared to the low budget for advertising.

klima:aktiv provides on-line information platforms to empower consumers, companies and professionals to act instantly. klima:aktiv is present on about 1500 event every year, which is only possible because of the broad network that was built.

### Providing advice and support

In klima:aktiv the main focus of advising are companies, which want to make their production processes energy efficient, want to retrofit their building stocks, want to introduce mobility management or want to change procurement to energy efficient appliances and IT-systems.

klima:aktiv provides for the empowerment of the existing consultants by providing for new advising tools, by benchmarking energy efficiency and by training consultants in specific topics.

### Activating and networking partners

Successful climate protection needs the power and the commitment of the partners of existing initiatives and networks as well as of the provinces and of the economy. klima:aktiv provides a platform for these partners.

The cooperation with the market partners generates the main impact of klima:aktiv. With the market knowledge and consumer relation, market partners can multiply the impact of activities. On the other hand, the partners profit from growing markets, from content provided and from the image of klima:aktiv.

Technology partners profit directly: the renewable energy industry, energy efficiency technology companies, public transport companies, and the building sector

Multipliers or mediators of change to a sustainable society profit from content and competence provided by klima:aktiv: business interest groups, NGOs, banks, insurances, energy utilities.

### Building the network

“klima:aktiv” was originally planned as a bundle of 23 different programs around specific climate-relevant topics with different focuses like e.g. awareness-raising, quality management, training. Implementing the single programs produced a lot of dynamics but also wide range of different arrangements with the partners, irritating the environment of the program. To handle

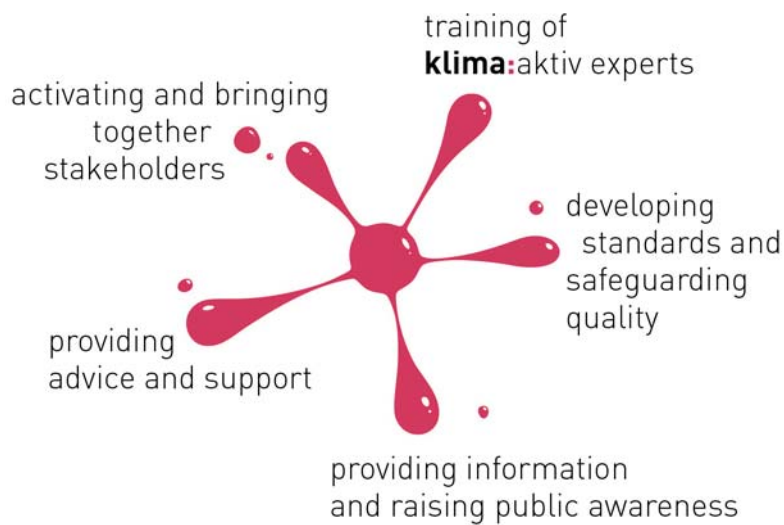


Figure 1: Activities of klima:aktiv

these conflicts, for example to ensure that many programs address the same target group in a coordinated way, classical ways of controlling are not appropriate. New ways of self organised processes are necessary. So we built communication architectures, especially with elements of large group interventions using web based networking tools such as open space, world cafe and future conference to achieve the following central goals:

1. produce a common understanding of the problem (e.g. to achieve a coordinated contact to the target group)
2. make transparent who is affected by a certain problem
3. establish a culture of high personal responsibility by the program owners
4. open the space, that all concerned function owner can find out solutions for the detected problems
5. be aware of “umbrella-management” to support the processes of finding solutions if necessary
6. strengthen the culture of high personal responsibility with a consequent monitoring for the planned activities

Over all it is important to arrange a highly cooperative culture between the competitive programs. The challenge for the responsible managers of the programs is to handle the balance between the cooperation in selected fields in the “klima:aktiv” network and the consequent competition with other programs for e.g. resources. A living network is the resource and the medium for further cooperations between competitive players<sup>3</sup>.

### Phase 1: Starting the adventure

In the end of 2003, it was clear that klima:aktiv would be started soon. In the case of klima:aktiv the following factors have been important in the starting phase:

3. Alexander Schmidt, (2007), co-opera - Kooperationen mit Leben füllen; Ein multiperspektivischer Blick auf Kooperationsprozesse in Unternehmensnetzwerken und Cluster, Carl Auer Systeme Forschungsverlag

### DETAILED, WELL ELABORATE CONCEPT FOR A QUICK START

A prerequisite for the launch of klima:aktiv was a sound concept and a handful of committed people. The new instrument “stimulus for market transformation” had been defined and outlined and had been supported also in the IEA. In a study the different market segments had been assessed to make it clear, where this instrument would make the best profit. And there was support from the industry, especially in the renewable sector, for the project.

### CONSIDERABLE TRUST IN THE PROJECT TEAM BY THE HIERARCHY

The department of “Energy and Environment Economy” in the Ministry of Environment was the nucleus for the development of the project. All the different ideas from a lot of stakeholders were focused into one project. So there was a strong and clear will to implement the project. But, a lot of good projects die unless there is faith and trust from the top level of the hierarchy. In this case there was a lot of freedom to develop and implement the project and the courage to experience a new kind of instrument to combat climate change. The head of division provided for the midterm financial and political commitment. Thus, a protected space had been created for the breeding and birth of the experiment. The hierarchy engaged with an open process.

### PARTICIPATIVE NUCLEUS FROM THE BEGINNING

The Metalog<sup>4</sup> principle states, that form and content should be congruent to be productive. Organisation and communication architecture of the project should fit to the task of building sustainable co-operation in an interorganisational network. Therefore it was essential, that participative elements were implemented from the beginning. In an open space workshop, the stakeholders could bring in their ideas. During the analysis study a lot of the future market partners of klima:aktiv were interviewed, and the business plans for the specific programs were developed together with the main stakeholders.

The project also profited from the experience of the Austrian Energy Agency with participative processes. In the nineties the

4. <http://www.metalogikon.com/>



communal energy concept of the city of Graz (KEK) and the climate protection program of the city of Vienna (KliP) had been designed and implemented in perennial processes with the broad inclusion of stakeholders.

This participative development of the program brought about also conflicts in the strategic orientation. The participating industries have laid the focus on business opportunities, which did not always fit with the mitigation goal of the initiative. For example, not all kind of implementation of heat pump is sensible from a climate protection perspective. But the heat pump industry has been eager to be recognised as a renewable energy industry. This conflict has remained although we clarified the problem in a mission statement.

#### **SWISS PROGRAM "ENERGIE 2000" AS A MODEL**

The Swiss program "Energie 2000" supported the confidence in the instrument and was a role model in three aspects. Firstly, it was an example for tackling the new challenge with a new instrument of government: stimulating change by facilitation of a strategic process through the whole society. Secondly, there were concrete products and service and programs and successes in the energy and transport field. Thirdly, "Energie 2000" was an example of new public management: Outsourcing the management of the programs to private institutions, building a framework for the public-private-partnership.

## **Phase 2: Building the structures**

In the second phase the main management and communication structures have been established. One after the other specific activity has been started. A lot of different institution started to work for the program. The program has been recognised by the stakeholders in the different market segments. The following factors have been important in the set-up phase

#### **BUILDING COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES WITHIN THE PROGRAM**

In this phase, the development of profile and identification with the vision of the project was crucial. Besides bilateral contracts and meetings, klima:aktiv needed a space for exchange. A complex social system requires strategic collaboration to achieve meaningful results and sustainable development. Therefore we developed the format of network conferences, which were designed to activate dialog and to find out the fields of necessity for cooperation as well as the relevant conditions for network-building. In these conferences the seeds for a culture of co-operation have been planted.

The communication architecture of the network conferences were designed by well mixed elements of different large group interventions. Large group interventions are powerful methods to activate a complex social system of stakeholders with different interests and different goals and to find out the working levers for successful, rapid change<sup>5</sup>.

The network conferences enabled the stakeholders and program managers in a periodic way to get a view from the helicopter perspective on the vision, the strategic plan and on the main ideas of the whole project. The standards for partner management, for corporate design and corporate identity were

being elaborated continuously. The conferences also integrated new persons and institutions in the project and produced overall strong commitment for the program.

The integration of the main stakeholders of the provinces developed – step by step – trust in the project, which had been seen with a lot of scepticism.

#### **BUILDING STANDARDS FOR PARTNER CO-OPERATION**

The different program managers in the different market segment started to work together with market partners. It soon became clear, that the co-operation with these partners will be the main asset of klima:aktiv. Therefore standards for the co-operation were developed: contracts, guidelines, profile for partners. Thus, the profile of klima:aktiv got clearer for the partners.

As a newcomer, klima:aktiv had to fit into the heterogeneous activities in the federalistic structure of Austria. The main strategic approach has been to try to strengthen and complement these activities. It has been a big challenge to communicate the added value of the federal program. Especially the advisory activities have been balanced with the regional activities. klima:aktiv also provided additional tools to empower advisors.

#### **LIVING THE PARADOX: PROJECT VERSUS NETWORK**

klima:aktiv is a project with an ordering party – the Ministry – and a lot of tenders and contracts with different institutions to perform activities and achieve goals. But, to be successful, there is a need to build robust networks. Only then you will have the multiplier effect and only then you will give a sustainable stimulus for market transformation. But you cannot plan networks in a way, they need openness for quick decisions, a key success factor is flexibility apart from a project plan, network partners are voluntary partners, they want to participate in the strategy of co-operation, they drop out when there are too many central interventions.

Therefore we have to balance the needs of the both logics. We have to safeguard the hierarchy from the possible chaos of the network and the network from possible interventions. This has been done by building management standards to safeguard that the network will keep the right direction and by absorbing the negative impacts of the interventions by the ordering party. The applied monitoring system allows us to receive feedback about the quality of implemented processes and standards as well as of the status quo of the programs in a periodic way. An important attribute of the monitoring system is that it does not substitute the controlling process for the programs. The program managers are in charge for a well operating controlling system.

#### **BUILDING MANAGEMENT AND CONTRACTUAL STRUCTURES**

The management and monitoring structure was designed to support a healthy balance between the system logic of a project and the logic of a network of co-operation. It has to meet the need of flexibility as well as the need for impact orientation.

Therefore we designed perennial contracts (mostly for four years) with rolling planning. Every year a new working program has to be negotiated. As market development can be very quick, the programs can adapt to the development. Thus the process logic is brought into the contracts.

5. <http://www.co-opera.com>

A second important instrument is the continuous orientation towards the negotiated outcomes of the activities. Each program had to draw a “logic model”<sup>6</sup>. It shows how you think you can get from your activities to the eventual goals. It shows the outputs, the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. From this you can derive a set of indicators, which show you, whether your theoretical model works or you have to adapt the program. We check these outcomes in monitoring meetings with the program managers. Thus, a quick learning process has been installed, which keeps the programs and the network focused on the outcome.

### **COMMUNICATE SUCCESSES**

In the set-up phase it is important to communicate on what you have achieved already. This strengthens confidence in a project which is not easily tangible, because it is very complex and interwoven with other instruments. Additionally it is very motivating for the network to see results.

### **Phase 3: Keep on going**

In 2006, the main structures and activities of klima:aktiv were in place. In 2007 the activities and services in most market sectors had been recognised and absorbed by the stakeholders and market partners. Then the process of renewing the contracts with some of the project managers begun.

The following factors have been important in the output phase.

### **ROBUSTNESS AND OPENNESS IN THE FACE OF CRISES**

Crises can have different faces, be it financial shortages, new persons in charge in the administration, new political priorities, breakdown of market partners, new institutions in the field, a phase of uncertainty.

Thus it is very important to establish a robust, flexible network and management structure which are infused with a lot of trust and confidence. It must not happen, that the confidence of the market partners erode, the trade mark be harmed, the program managers are discouraged in case of uncertainty of financial or political commitments.

But all of these crises give you valuable hints for productive changes in the program. Thus it is as well important to be open for the lessons that can be learnt from them. The flexibility and the self reflection as well as a strong feedback culture are the main ingredients for a well learning program.

### **DON'T STOP CREATING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR YOUR PARTNERS**

The partner network is a crucial asset of the program which has to be cultivated. Being a voluntary co-operation we have to search for the production of additional value for the partners all the time, be it access to new markets, quality standards, be it image transfer, be it awards for best practises, be it advice, be it a network of professionals, i.e. as an complementary service for a financial institution.

### **PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS**

klima:aktiv was ready for public campaigns when actual services had been in place for the customers, be it information platforms, advising structures, klima:aktiv professionals, product standards. So, when you get the customer to think about climate friendly behaviour, it is important to give him advice and added value directly.

### **CHECK THE PROFILE AND IMAGE OF THE PROGRAM REGULARLY**

klima:aktiv was evaluated by Wuppertal Institut in 2007. This was an important step in the learning process for the program as well as a sound basis for legitimization. klima:aktiv has been redesigned afterwards to simplify the structure and the profile, 4 thematic clusters with their own identities have been worked out and the management structure followed this development.

### **What makes change happen?**

Facilitating change is the main mission of klima:aktiv, a new role for government in the light of a very complex and intensive change process in the society. The role of a facilitator often is in conflict with the traditional role of regulating administration and with the “man of action” role of politicians. But if you want to stimulate change for complex problems without waiting for the big crisis, this instrument can be very helpful. It is a means to get the support, the know-how, the resources, the dedication of a big variety of persons and institutions, which actively will be part of the change.

If we could plan klima:aktiv again on the green meadow, this would – form our experience - be the factors, that would probably make the adventure of change even more successful.

### **UMBRELLA BRAND**

klima:aktiv stands as a registered brand, a corporate design. Under the umbrella of klima:aktiv all the various activities are gathered. The logo and brand “klima:aktiv” can be used also by the company partners under certain conditions and is used also for some of the standards.

This is an enormous added value in comparison to a bundle of stand alone programs. It is also a prerequisite for the attraction of business partners.

### **INTEGRATION WITH THE OTHER INSTRUMENTS OF THE CLIMATE STRATEGY AND ENERGY POLICY**

The impact of the program can be increased enormously, when it is well embedded into the existing energy- and climate policy strategy (if there is one at all). If so, the different instruments can easily support each other and the program gets the clear goal and vision from the climate and energy strategy. If not, it is very difficult to communicate a vision and concrete goals for the program alone, as the program is designed to integrate different instruments and actors.

A good national strategy also makes it much easier for the program to serve as a platform for all stakeholders, especially for the provinces. Therefore it would be wise to place the program in a politically neutral body.

6. <http://www.sustainability.at/?k=team&lang=de&u=martinuzzi>

## MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The management and monitoring structure should support a healthy balance between the system logic of a project and the logic of a network of co-operations. It has to meet the need of flexibility as well as the need for outcome orientation.

It is important to have a commitment for a perennial period, but to keep the contracts as flexible as possible. This can be achieved by continuous planning.

The monitoring process has to support the learning process of the program. Thus you need to have an idea of the inner logic of the program and derive short-term outcomes which you can monitor. So, you can see also in short term, whether the programs are operating as planned and you get the focus from the activities and outputs more towards the outcomes.

## COMMUNICATION ARCHITECTURE

1. Start with a well designed communication process
2. Trust in self organization and participation
3. Be prepared to change ongoing communication processes
4. Define a clear set of standards for co-operation, quality and corporate design

The communication structure is a main means to build a lively network. It should be designed to support the exchange of experience, to provide opportunities for building co-operation, to

bring in different interests and to use the different perspective for new solutions. Therefore communication should be transparent; there should be concrete standards for co-operation. It should be dialog oriented.

## STRATEGIC PARTNER MANAGEMENT

Business partner are a core asset of such a program. Besides the communication and the standards for partnership, the strategy is important from the beginning. If you have a strategy and the tools and standards are in place, it is possible to acquire business partner on a high level, i.e. by the minister himself. Thus, whole branches can be interested and you can combine this instrument with voluntary agreements.

## THE VISION

Change is much easier when you know that it is an agreeable world you are changing to. Therefore it is favourable to put the new chances and benefits in the middle of the communication. Therefore it is important to draw a concrete picture of this new world or life style and condense these examples into a vision for a sustainable society. And then you have to search for VIPs who can transport this vision authentically.

In the end, two main factors are essential: a realistic vision of an agreeable future and a network of public and private institutions, which give momentum for the change and incorporate the change.