

**A Framework for Regional Cooperation  
between  
Department of Commerce, Vorarlberg, Austria  
and  
Department of Commerce, North Carolina, United States of America**

The Department of Commerce, Province of Vorarlberg, Austria, and the Department of Commerce, North Carolina, United States of America enter into this cooperation agreement to encourage activities for mutual economic benefit. The respective organizations hereby agree to support, encourage and coordinate cooperative activities that involve businesses, public agencies, educational institutions, or non-profit organizations for the express purpose of strengthening the two regions' economies and improving the employment opportunities and economic status of our citizens.

We seek to establish a relationship that will produce economic benefits and enhance comparative advantages in both regions. We will focus in particular on activities that accelerate rates of entrepreneurial activity and innovation. These activities will include but not be limited to:

- joint R&D projects;
- benchmarking of high performance businesses or development strategies;
- forming trade alliances or flexible manufacturing networks;
- exchanging students, faculty, or administrators;
- matching suppliers with customers or trade partners;
- carrying out joint regional planning;
- conducting comparative research and organizing reciprocal study tours;
- sharing internet-based management or skill development courses.

We hereby endorse the following "Principles of Economic Cooperation."


- Free and voluntary exchange of non-proprietary innovations, information, and technologies
- Forums for on-going dialogue and communication
- Regular venues to formulate and implement cooperative activities
- Monitoring and reporting of progress and achievements
- Systematic sharing of experiences and lessons learned

The process will be coordinated and overseen by regional organizations in each location that represent leaders from business, education, community, and government. The two organizations agree to meet periodically in order to develop the levels of understanding and trust necessary for cooperation.

This agreement will remain in force for five years and is subject to revision and renewal by mutual consent. Either region may terminate the agreement at any time, although it is understood that such action would only be taken after mutual consultation in order to avoid any possible inconvenience to the other region.

On this 10<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2000, we, the undersigned, representing the governments of our region and recognizing the potential value of international cooperation and transnational learning, endorse this project and offer our support.

For the State of  
North Carolina, USA



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Rick Carlisle, Secretary of Commerce

For the Province of Vorarlberg,  
Austria



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Manfred Rein, Landesrat

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