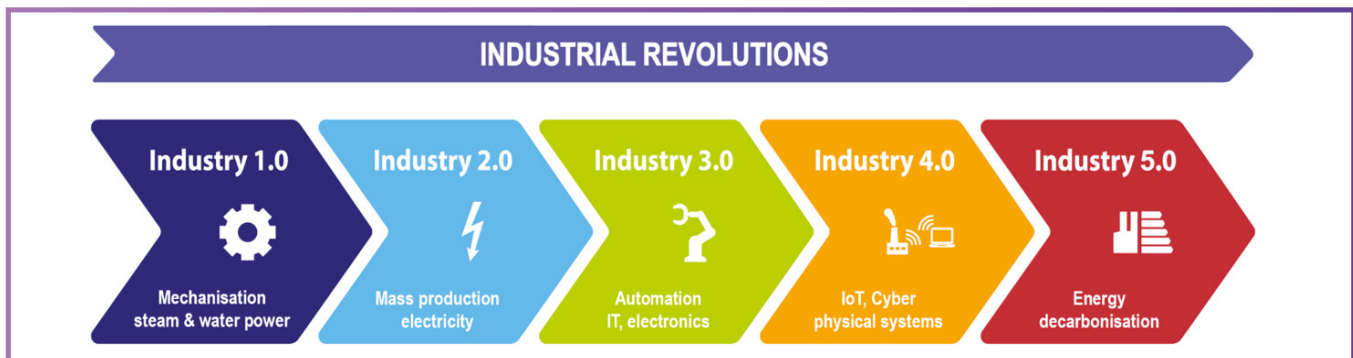


# Upper Austria: The Energy Transition Leaders Initiative



Upper Austria is the industrial heart of Austria and generates 25 % of the country's industrial exports. Since manufacturing is responsible for 44 % of the total energy consumption, its decarbonisation is critical for the energy transition. Already 2.3 billion Euro per year are invested in the energy transition, of which 30 % are spent on energy efficiency measures in industry.

However, understanding how to achieve climate neutrality in practice and concretely plan the process for a specific company is a path not yet travelled by many. The novel initiative "Industrial Energy Transition Leaders", developed by the regional energy agency of Upper Austria (OÖ Energiesparverband), is strongly contributing to making the industrial energy transition reality. It is based on the cooperation between 15 pioneering companies to develop practical, real life approaches for achieving carbon neutrality. These 15 Energy Leaders employ over 25,000 staff and generate more than 7 billion Euro in annual turnover at 400 locations. As forerunners, they have already implemented many energy efficiency and renewable energy projects within their own companies, and thereby reduced their costs and increased their competitiveness. The aim is now to achieve climate neutrality and phase out fossil fuels!



## Mission statement Energy Transition Leaders Initiative

We show how companies are phasing out fossil fuels and thereby increase their competitiveness and profits.

We accompany and showcase pioneer companies that work successfully on this vision.

We support Upper Austrian companies in the development of products and services for the industrial energy transition.

Companies, public organisations and researchers work together on a vision of a "climate neutral economy", thus creating an innovation ecosystem for the industrial energy transition.

## Industry 5.0: Decarbonisation – a decisive competitive advantage

With Europe's political decision to strive for climate neutrality by 2050 – and Austria's ambition to reach this by 2040 – a clear goal has been set. The EU sees decarbonisation as a major challenge, but also as its main strategy for economic growth.

In Upper Austria, the manufacturing sector is responsible for 44 % of the total energy consumption and thus plays a critical role in the energy transition. Much has been achieved in the past 15 years: Despite 55 % economic growth, greenhouse gas emissions were reduced! It is now time to move forward with fresh impetus and significantly decrease them further.

The initiative showcases the diversity and importance of the benefits created by the energy transition. Increased productivity through improved working conditions (e.g. better lighting or indoor air quality), reduced failures and extended maintenance intervals are just a few examples. Companies that show commitment to sustainability are also more attractive employers and benefit from a better image with customers and partners. Companies that operate internationally – of which there are particularly many in Upper Austria – are frequently confronted with sustainability requirements from their customers (e.g. in the automotive sector) and the risk of being excluded from supply chains.

We seem to be at the turning point of another "industrial revolution". Following automation and digitisation, "Industry 5.0 decarbonisation" will characterise the next big step in the industrial transformation. Decreasing dependence on fossil fuels is an ever more critical factor for international competitiveness. For companies, this transformation process requires designing a solid strategy and its step-by-step implementation.

ENERGY TRANSITION  
LEADERS





## Energy and climate balance, roadmaps and sharing knowledge

In the context of the initiative, a novel tool was developed: the "Energy and Climate Balance". It helps assess how far a company is on its way to climate neutrality. It enables quantifying a company's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in a simple manner – using only limited input data – and helps prioritise measures. Following a testing phase, it is now offered by the OÖ Energiesparverband as part of the regional energy advice service that is available to all companies.

Company-specific "Energy Transition Roadmaps" are at the very core of the initiative. They are developed in an interactive process and contain goals, measures and technology options. The essence of the Energy Leaders initiative is sharing knowledge and mutual inspiration, e.g. in the context of regular workshops, meetings and company tours.

## An innovation ecosystem for the industrial energy transition

The partner companies are pioneers in the energy transition and have already implemented many investments and organisational measures. These include e.g. LED lighting, renewable heat from biomass and heat pumps, heat recovery solutions, large PV systems, purchasing green electricity, energy management systems, electric vehicles and ambitious efficiency requirements for new buildings and renovations.

Over the next few years, the focus will be on using innovations to tackle fields that are still economically or technologically challenging today. Some examples are the decarbonisation of logistics and transport and of high-temperature processes as well as including company suppliers in the process. The growing flexibility of the energy system offers new possibilities, such as storage solutions that increase the self-consumption of renewable energy generated on-site. It is also crucial that energy and CO<sub>2</sub> indicators be adopted as key performance indicators (KPIs). This ensures – as with other important company figures – that progress is regularly checked and becomes part of the strategic decision-making process.

## Together for competitiveness and quality of life

All initiative partners consider it essential to involve their own employees in the transformation processes and see their active participation as key for the long-term success of the energy transition. This takes the form of regular information about energy-efficiency measures in the company, tips for saving energy at home, ideas competitions, cross-department energy teams or incentives for sustainable mobility for employees' commute to work.

The exchange between the initiative's partners as well as the technical inputs from specialists provide inspiration, motivation and support for the concrete implementation of innovative solutions. As a result, climate neutrality can be achieved – together with higher competitiveness and quality of life!

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## The initiative at a glance

- **15 companies:**  
Bellaflora, BMW, Fronius, KEBA, Miba, Obermayr, ÖkoFEN, Peneder, Resch & Frisch, Rexel, Rübiger, Sparkasse, Starlim, TIGER, Weber Hydraulik
- **Total number of employees:**  
> 25,000
- **Annual turnover:**  
> 7 billion Euro
- **Production sites:**  
> 40 in Europe, USA and Asia
- **Sales locations:**  
> 400

