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Innovation activities of enterprises slightly decreased in Corona pandemic

In 2022, 57% of Austrian enterprises reported innovation activities, compared to 60% in 2020

Vienna, 2024-07-04 – According to Statistics Austria, 56.7% of Austrian enterprises stated in 2022 that they had carried out innovation activities in the three years prior to the survey. This proportion has thus fallen slightly by 3.3 percentage points compared to the innovation survey 2020 (60.0%). In 2018, 62.6% of enterprises had reported innovations.

“During the Corona pandemic, innovation activities of Austrian enterprises decreased. The share of enterprises with innovation activities, like product innovations or business process innovations, fell by around 3 percentage points to 56.7%, while the share of turnover generated by innovative products sunk as well by 3 percentage points to 10.1%,” says Tobias Thomas, Director-General of Statistics Austria.

Fewer enterprises introduced new products and processes

Since the beginning of the Covid pandemic, the level of innovation activities in Austria declined for all types of innovation to a similar extent. The share of enterprises that introduced new or improved goods or services, which can therefore be called product innovators, decreased from 32.3% to 29.5%, thus, by 2.8 percentage points. 48.7% of enterprises reported the introduction of a new business process which accounts for a decrease of 3.4 percentage points compared to the two years before (see table 1). 17.9% of all enterprises introduced a market novelty between 2020 and 2022, which represents a decline of 3.1 percentage points compared to the period from 2018 to 2020.

At the same time, the share of sales generated by previously introduced innovations also declined. It still amounted to 13.0% in 2020 and fell to 10.1% in 2022 (see table 2).

More enterprises introduced new or improved goods (24.8%) than new or improved services (17.8%). Among business process innovations, new or improved information processing or communication methods were the most frequently cited innovations (30.3%).

A slight increase could be observed for the share of enterprises with innovation cooperation: 19.8% of all firms cooperated with third parties for their innovation. Between 2018 and 2020, this share was slightly smaller with 18.6%.

Total innovation spending increased from €11.1 billion in 2020 to €11.9 billion in 2022. Since total sales increased disproportionately during this period due to the high price increases, innovation expenditures as a percentage of turnover decreased from 2.3% to 1.9%.

Manufacturing more innovative than service, large enterprises more than smaller firms

Enterprises belonging to the manufacturing sector are slightly more often innovation active than service firms. Among the manufacturers, 59.1% set innovation activities between 2020 and 2022. Among service enterprises, this proportion was 55.8%. The share of innovative enterprises also increases with their size. While 83.0% of enterprises with more than 250 persons employed engaged in innovation activities, this share fell to 70.3% among medium-sized enterprises (50 to 249 persons employed) and was considerably lower with 52.1% among small firms (10 to 49 employed persons employed).

One out of six enterprises received public funding which was used for innovation

32.5% of all enterprises received public funding between 2020 and 2022, either from the federal government, regional or local governments, or the EU. Approximately half of them – 16.4% of all enterprises – used these funds also for innovation activities. The federal government was the most important actor for innovation funding: 14.0% of all enterprises received funding for innovation from it.

Eco-innovations widespread according to enterprises' self-assessment

In 2022, three quarters of all innovators reported having introduced at least one innovation that had a positive impact on the environment. 46.0% of the innovative enterprises even self-assessed that they had introduced an innovation that had a significant positive impact on the environment. A further 29.0% of the firms reported the introduction of innovations that had an impact on environmental protection, but only to an insignificant extent.

Table 1: Enterprises with innovations from 2014 onwards

Indicator	2014–2016	2016–2018	2018–2020	2020–2022
	as % of all enterprises			
Innovation active enterprises	62.0	62.6	60.0	56.7
Product innovators	34.4	34.6	32.3	29.5
Business process innovators	.	55.2	51.7	48.3
Enterprises with market novelties	22.7	23.0	21.0	17.9
Enterprises with innovation cooperation	24.0	17.8	18.6	19.8

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Innovation surveys (CIS 2016, CIS 2018, CIS 2020, CIS 2022).

Table 2: Innovative share of turnover and innovation expenditures from 2016 onwards

Indicator	2016	2018	2020	2022
	as % of total turnover			
Share of turnover with innovative products	12.6	14.9	13.0	10.1
Share of turnover of innovation expenditures	2.2	2.2	2.3	1.9

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Innovation surveys (CIS 2014, CIS 2016, CIS 2018, CIS 2020).

For detailed results and further information please refer to our [website](#).

Information on methodology, definitions: Data originate from the weighted results of the Community Innovation Survey (CIS 2022) which was conducted by Statistics Austria on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Labour and Economy (BMAW). It was a sample survey with voluntary participation for which data from around 3 750 enterprises with ten or more employed persons could be used. The industries surveyed were: mining and quarrying; manufacturing; electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; water supply, waste management; wholesale trade; transportation and storage; information and communication; financial and insurance services; architectural and engineering activities; scientific research and development; advertising and market research. The survey is carried out every two years and covers the period of the three prior years.

An **innovation** is a new or improved good, service or process that differs significantly from the enterprise's previous products or processes and that has been made available on the market or brought into use by the enterprise.

A **product innovation** is the introduction of a new or improved good or a new or improved service. A **business process innovation** is the introduction of a new or improved business process that differs significantly from the business processes that were previously used by the firm.

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