

Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture

Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture and Stimulus Program

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Principles

The Federal Government of Austria plays an important role in the development of the nation's building culture. The government builds, owns, and operates properties together with its various legal entities. Acting in these capacities, it is able to actively contribute to the culture of building and broaden its influence as a model actor. In addition, as a legislative authority, it drafts regulatory, taxation, and subsidy laws, acts as a supervisory and executive body, and provides incentives and coordination.

The Austrian Government is committed to responsibly supporting building culture in Austria, and has thus established Building Culture Guidelines for its own area of effect. Its objectives are to comprehensively promote building culture and create a broader societal awareness of its principles, especially among leaders in politics, business, and administration. To achieve this, a comprehensive strategy is needed at the federal level that will anchor building culture across all departments and disciplines at the federal, provincial, and local levels.

Building culture is created wherever people shape their habitat. Building culture manifests itself in buildings, streets, and squares, as well as in structures for transport and infrastructure, business and industry, and village centers. It thrives on the interplay of many factors. These include the users—whose daily lives are conditioned by the quality of the building culture—public and private builders, and the planning professions of architecture, urban and landscape design, civil engineering, and land use planning.

Building culture needs both tradition and innovation to create tomorrow's built heritage from the achievements of the past and present. How we design and modify the cities, towns, and landscapes of Austria, which processes are used and which results achieved, support the identity of the populace. A successful building culture raises standards of living and strengthens the Austrian economy.

In addition to the Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture, this document also details the accompanying stimulus program measures. Additional measures and proposals from the extensive pool of ideas collected during the preparation process will be kept on file by the Building Culture Advisory Board and will form the basis of future discussions and decisions.

The Government of Austria is committed to a comprehensive understanding of building culture.

Good building culture ...

- ... is sustainable. It seeks a balance between social, economic, ecological, and cultural objectives.
- ... is beautiful. It considers aesthetic standards that are appropriate to the context.
- ... connects. It creates buildings and open spaces by involving users and other affected parties who can bring their knowledge and interests into transparent processes that take this into account.
- ... is gender-equitable. It gives equal consideration to the interests and needs of women and men in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all concepts, projects, and measures.
- ... creates identity. By demanding a high standard of design and technology, it makes a positive contribution to the self-image of a society. However, it is also feasibly and solidly built, and creates enduring positive memories, thus offering a means to identify with cities, towns, and landscapes.
- ... is practical. It leads to cost efficient building solutions that meet demands.
- ... conserves resources. It handles the landscape, earth, existing buildings, energy, and raw materials with care and restraint.
- ... is of high quality. It is carefully planned down to the last detail and executed professionally.
- ... is adaptive. It reacts robustly to technological, ecological, economic, and social change, and respects the diversity of our society.

The Government of Austria voluntarily commits itself to upholding the Building Culture Guidelines, in the public interest and as the basis for a partnership-oriented approach for all groups of stakeholders. The guidelines are divided into six areas of action:

- Development of towns, cities, and the landscape
- Construction, restoration, and operation
- Processes and procedures
- Promoting awareness and public participation
- Research and transfer of knowledge and expertise
- Guidance, coordination, and cooperation

The 20 Guidelines

Development of towns, cities, and the landscape

- Guideline 1: Strengthening town and city centers
- Guideline 2: Reducing land use and developing land in high quality
- Guideline 3: Prioritizing quality technical infrastructure in building culture
- Guideline 4: Promoting high-value public spaces

Construction, restoration, and maintenance

- Guideline 5: Applying and advancing the principle of sustainability
- Guideline 6: Adapting, simplifying, and harmonizing building regulations to meet building culture requirements
- Guideline 7: Carefully maintaining our built heritage and developing it for the future
- Guideline 8: Incorporating principles of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion

Processes and procedures

- Guideline 9: Establishing a standard of comprehensive and well-documented process design
- Guideline 10: Expanding the use of architectural competitions
- Guideline 11: Implementing and strengthening planning and design advisory committees
- Guideline 12: Awarding separate design and construction contracts

Promoting awareness and public participation

- Guideline 13: Making building culture understandable
- Guideline 14: Expanding participatory practices

Research and transfer of knowledge and expertise

- Guideline 15: Establishing building culture research nationally and internationally
- Guideline 16: Creating qualifications for public officials and improving networks for sharing existing knowledge

Guidance, coordination, and cooperation

- Guideline 17: Developing building culture guidance tools
- Guideline 18: Tying public funding for construction and restoration to quality criteria
- Guideline 19: Incentivizing the construction of sustainable housing
- Guideline 20: Fostering building culture collaboratively

Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture and Stimulus Program

Development of towns, cities, and the landscape

The development of settlements is a key factor influencing building culture. The Government of Austria is committed to preserving livable cultural landscapes and valuable cultural assets by developing sites and infrastructure while conserving resources. It is directly guided by existing goals and recommendations and participates actively in the preparation and implementation of future comprehensive strategies, such as those of the Austrian Spatial Planning Concept (ÖREK) partnerships.

Guideline 1: Strengthening town and city centers

The Government of Austria actively pursues the principle of “inner development before outer development” and acts as a model through the construction, operation, and use of its own properties.

Stimulus program measures

- 1.1. The Government of Austria shall actively help shape the ÖREK Partnership to Strengthen Town and City Centers. Within the framework of this partnership, the government shall also assess legal and financial measures to prioritize inner development before outer development and thus counteract sprawl.
- 1.2. Within the framework of the *klimaaktiv* climate protection initiative, the Government of Austria shall prepare a housing settlement evaluation system. In this system, a positive evaluation of a residential settlement or neighborhood will only be possible if it has a certain compactness and density.
- 1.3. The Government of Austria shall make an approved nationwide grading system for public transport available, coordinated through the ÖROK. This tool can be used to evaluate the suitability of different areas for specific types of use, building density, and construction methods, and is also useful for developing instruments to control and regulate land use planning.

- 1.4. The Government of Austria shall support ÖROK activities to develop a nationwide accessibility analysis for motorized private transport and public transport. This information can serve as a basis for local and regional spatial planning.

Guideline 2: Reducing land use and developing land in high quality

The Government of Austria is committed to residential development that is as efficient and compact as possible, and ensures that its own projects use land effectively.

Stimulus program measures

- 2.1. The Government of Austria shall take the potential for economical and high-quality land development in Austria into account as it continues drafting legislation on land and space. This includes international examples (such as urban development funding in Germany).
- 2.2. The Government of Austria shall ratify the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe (Florence 2000).
- 2.3. The Government of Austria shall create clear framework conditions for the implementation of regional development agreements at provincial level.
- 2.4. The Government of Austria shall support ÖROK processes for the coordination and implementation of specific measures and proposals for measures on the increasing development of settlements in high-priority growth zones and existing town and city cores.

Guideline 3: Prioritizing quality technical infrastructure in building culture

The Government of Austria focuses on ensuring high-quality design in the preservation of existing and development of new infrastructure.

Stimulus program measure

- 3.1. The Government of Austria shall evaluate the implementation of exemplary competitions for infrastructure projects (aided by a consortium of experts in the fields of engineering, landscape planning, and architecture), including assessing feasibility for wider use.

Guideline 4: Promoting high-value public spaces

The Government of Austria promotes high-value public spaces in the design of its own projects and focuses on excellence in public space as a legislating body, incentive-setter, and coordinator.

Stimulus program measure

- 4.1. The Government of Austria shall review the adaptation of road traffic regulations to ease visits to and multifunctional uses of public space.

Construction, restoration, and maintenance

The Government of Austria is committed to safeguarding and enhancing the quality of design and building in Austria. This commitment includes the quality of architectural design, the use of innovative and future-oriented technologies, the protection of architectural heritage, and careful design and construction with high-quality craftsmanship and attention to cost-effectiveness. This contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Guideline 5: Applying and advancing the principle of sustainability

The Government of Austria promotes and calls for the integrative implementation of ecological, economic, social, and cultural factors in constructing, restoring, and operating its own properties. It acts as a model for sustainability and conservation in construction.

Stimulus program measures

- 5.1. In two projects, as a purchaser, the Government of Austria shall document the energy material flow from the construction of buildings, including infrastructure, building operation, and building-induced mobility, as precisely as possible. This data shall be made available to the public as far as possible and used to derive possible guidelines for future construction projects.
- 5.2. As a purchaser, the Government of Austria is already pursuing ways to establish cost optimization over the life cycle of a building, rather than simply considering construction costs (e.g. the *klimaaktiv* building standards of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW), the Benchmarking Forum of the Burghauptmannschaft Österreich, the BIG Holistic Building Program, and the Federal Office of Monuments' preservation standards). Using this basis, the BMLFUW, BIG, and Burghauptmannschaft Österreich shall evaluate pilot projects with the purchaser's consent, focusing on life-cycle costs. They shall make the results available to the public, redirect them as potential guidelines, and amend existing specifications for cost optimization in future projects.

- 5.3. Every two to three years, the Government of Austria shall accept nominations for the National Award for Architecture and Sustainability. This award honors and distinguishes projects that combine sustainable and resource-conserving construction with high-quality architecture.
- 5.4. In conjunction with the preparation of an action plan for energy efficiency upgrades for heritage-protected buildings, the Government of Austria shall evaluate their practical application in the restoration of selected heritage buildings owned by the government and its legal entities, monitoring energy savings, deriving possible guidelines for its future restoration projects, and making these results available to the public.
- 5.5. In one or several properties, the Austrian Federal Forestry Department shall test alternative restoration techniques that are on the verge of becoming state-of-the-art. These assessment reports can be made available.

Guideline 6: Adapting, simplifying, and harmonizing building regulations to meet building culture requirements

In cooperation with the provinces, the Government of Austria expedites the process of adapting, simplifying, and harmonizing federal and provincial laws, regulations, standards, and norms for construction. A holistic approach will be given preference over sectoral interests.

Stimulus program measures

- 6.1. The Government of Austria shall enable experts from its own staff, related committees, design and building professions, and from among those circles with a focus on building culture to work together on national and international standards.
- 6.2. As a purchaser, the Government of Austria shall undertake a project to specifically study the impacts of individual laws, regulations, standards, and norms on existing and newly-constructed buildings.

Guideline 7: Carefully maintaining our building culture heritage and developing it for the future

The Government of Austria is optimizing the conditions required for the preservation, further development, and appropriate use of Austria's built cultural heritage, and is developing its own properties using these as a model.

Stimulus program measures

- 7.1. The Government of Austria shall ratify the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada 1985).

- 7.2. The restoration of the Austrian Parliament Building shall be carried out according to the *klimaaktiv* catalog of criteria for heritage-protected buildings. This project will be documented in detail and the experience gained from it made available to the public.

Guideline 8: Incorporating principles of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion

The Government of Austria is committed to the principle of *Design for All*, with barrier-free design and construction that benefits nearly all users. In city and town planning and architecture, it considers the different needs of users (by gender, age, state of health, etc.), criteria for the promotion of a better quality of life, and a healthy living environment. Key prerequisites for this are expert advice and design standards for barrier-free construction.

Stimulus program measures

- 8.1. The Government of Austria shall support expert consulting and qualified design as well as raising awareness about barrier-free design and accessibility among all related professions, whereby accessibility is understood in a broad sense.
- 8.2. The Government of Austria shall require education in barrier-free design as a compulsory subject of all relevant professional training (e.g. architecture, civil engineering, structural engineering) and for public servants (e.g. the Administrative Academy of the Federal Republic of Austria).
- 8.3. For all of its own major construction projects as well as all federally subsidized major construction projects, the Government of Austria shall consult experts in barrier-free design—relying in particular on the expertise and knowledge of disability organizations (see the National Action Plan on Disability 2012–2020, Measure 113).

Processes and procedures

Good building culture requires quality-oriented, transparent, and fair procedures in the planning, design, and execution of construction projects. The Government of Austria is committed to embedding such processes and procedures within the scope of its own activities and that of its decentralized legal entities. The Government of Austria guarantees gender parity on all boards and committees, in compliance with the Federal Act on Equal Treatment.

Guideline 9: Establishing a standard of comprehensive and well-documented project design

As part of project planning, in advance of any detailed project design, the Government of Austria carries out and documents a comprehensive assessment of needs, ideas, and process design.

Stimulus program measure

- 9.1. The Government of Austria shall evaluate federal projects in which comprehensive project planning was carried out, including the determination of needs and an analysis of alternatives, and shall subsequently draft guidelines for different building types.

Guideline 10: Expanding the use of architectural competitions

The Government of Austria views competition processes as an instrument for ensuring quality, and is increasingly using it to select projects and designers.

Stimulus program measures

- 10.1. The Government of Austria shall develop a regulatory template for competitions (e.g. based on the Competition Standards for Architecture—CSA 2010), suitable for small and medium-sized contractors and clients as well. It shall include such things as a definition of an architecture competition (as defined by the CSA), quality standards for the composition and scheduling of juries, and the integration of future users into the competition procedure.
- 10.2. As part of the awarding process, the Government of Austria shall apply the criteria for innovative public procurement (PPPI—Public Procurement Promoting Innovation in Austria) to three projects, evaluate its success, and draw conclusions.

Guideline 11: Implementing and strengthening planning and design advisory committees

The Government of Austria supports the establishment of additional planning and design advisory committees in order to ensure the quality of planning and design tasks by incorporating expertise independent of clients and contractors.

Stimulus program measures

11.1. The Government of Austria and its legal entities shall establish advisory committees for planning and design and create regionally pooled solutions that make use of smaller units within their scope of activity. The Government of Austria shall aim for gender balance in constituting all planning and design advisory committees.

11.2. The Government of Austria shall provide information and sample procedures for the establishment and integration of planning and design advisory committees for provinces and municipalities at HELP.gv.at.

Guideline 12: Awarding separate design and construction contracts

The Government of Austria awards design and construction contracts separately. This is an important prerequisite for high-quality building culture. In many construction projects, a preliminary decision about the design must be made before it is possible to compare construction bids.

Stimulus program measure

12.1. The Government of Austria and its legal entities shall ensure that planning and execution are awarded separately in public construction projects. In certain cases, however, commissioning one contractor for the entirety should not be ruled out. These cases require proper justification.

Promoting awareness and public participation

Raising awareness and public participation promote an awareness of building culture and an identification with place. Public involvement is proving increasingly indispensable and valuable to the design and construction of public building projects. The Government of Austria is committed to actively raising awareness and promoting participation in order to empower citizens to take part in decisions and ensure they are in the interest of the public good.

Guideline 13: Making building culture understandable

In cooperation with the provinces, municipalities, universities, unions, and advocacy groups, the Government of Austria is committed to anchoring the issue of building culture in target group specific educational opportunities for children, adolescents, and adults.

Stimulus program measures

- 13.1. The Government of Austria shall utilize international theme years, such as the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and the 2018 EU Council Presidency, as opportunities to actively shape international discourse, international networking, and education on building culture.
- 13.2. The Government of Austria shall ensure the ongoing raising of awareness for building culture by supporting organizations that promote contemporary architecture in all federal provinces of Austria, as well as numerous other institutions and initiatives for building culture education.
- 13.3. The Government of Austria shall promote the raising of awareness for building culture by awarding architectural prizes and by financially supporting already established construction, architecture, and urban design awards. The Government of Austria awards the following prizes and others: the National Architecture Prize, the National Award for Architecture and Sustainability, and the Grand Austrian State Prize.
- 13.4. The Government of Austria shall contract and support public relations and publicity work, targeted towards specific demographic and age groups, on issues of building culture that incorporate political, social, economic, and cultural conditions.
- 13.5. At HELP.gv.at, the Government of Austria shall post further information on building culture, including on aspects such as construction, housing and the environment, zoning, environmental impact assessments, public participation, and more.

Guideline 14: Expanding participatory practices

The Government of Austria applies the standards for public participation in design, construction, restoration, and preservation that were adopted in 2008 by the Council of Ministers, and is committed to further developing them.

Stimulus program measure

14.1. The Government of Austria shall apply the standards of public participation to three projects of the federal government and its legal entities, and evaluate them using interdisciplinary teams.

Research and transfer of knowledge and expertise

The Government of Austria is committed to the establishment of a culture of learning in building culture. This includes scholarly and artistic research on topics of building culture, the evaluation of processes and results in design, construction, and operation, and the transfer of acquired knowledge to education and training. The Government of Austria is committed to expanding research on the topic of gender equality in design.

Guideline 15: Establishing building culture research nationally and internationally

The Government of Austria recognizes the need for action in academic and artistic research on issues of building culture. It is committed to establishing and sufficiently funding disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research projects across the entire spectrum of building culture.

Stimulus program measure

15.1. The Government of Austria shall commit to putting research objectives on topics in building culture on the Research Target Map.

Guideline 16: Creating qualifications for public officials and improving networks for sharing existing knowledge

The Government of Austria is taking measures to build competence, add further qualifications, and improve networks for public officials on the subject of building culture.

Stimulus program measures

16.1. The Government of Austria shall publish a Building Culture Education Map as an overview of training and continuing education on the subject of building culture in Austria. This shall provide a central point for specific available offers that contain important information and instruction

manuals for building culture actors at all levels (for example, purchasers of services in the fields of design, construction, operation, and process design).

16.2. The Government of Austria shall establish continuing education offerings in the field of building culture at the Federal Administrative Academy (encompassing organizational, funding, and taxation expertise in building culture and gender-balanced design and construction; “building culture discovery” excursions for federal, provincial, and municipal administrative staff).

16.3. The Government of Austria shall organize major events and excursions on the subject of building culture for public officials.

Guidance, coordination, and cooperation

Activities of the Government of Austria related to building culture must be clearly and transparently documented and made publicly available in order to abet the development and implementation of interdepartmental strategies. More effective management of building culture requires cooperation and coordination among the ministries, as well as the provinces, municipalities, universities, unions, and advocacy groups.

Guideline 17: Developing building culture guidance tools

The Government of Austria expedites the achievement of building culture objectives in regulation, taxation, and funding by means of special steering tools anchored in and coordinated at the EU and federal levels.

Stimulus program measures

17.1. The Government of Austria shall assess the establishment of a facility for building culture or the expansion of an existing agency to provide information, guidance, and coordination of federal activities in building culture affairs, as well as the development of building culture strategies in cooperation with educational institutions, local authorities, and professional organizations and institutions.

17.2. Together with the provincial administrations, the Government of Austria shall assess the anchoring of digital building permit applications in the building code, thus enabling the compilation of standardized building data in the medium term.

Guideline 18: Tying public funding for construction and restoration to quality criteria

The Government of Austria works within the scope of its guidance to ensure high-quality settlement design and construction in Austria. When allocating public funds, it reviews financial and fiscal options for tying funding to quality criteria and advocates the coordination of third-party funding. These include social criteria (e.g. accessibility, diversity, and inclusion).

Stimulus program measures

- 18.1. The Government of Austria shall continue to develop existing building culture quality criteria for the awarding of public funding.
- 18.2. The Government of Austria shall remain committed to ensuring that ambitious quality criteria such as those of the klimaaktiv building standards for new construction and restoration (commercial and residential buildings, such as model refurbishment projects) are anchored in environmental subsidies.
- 18.3. The Government of Austria shall remain committed to applying gender budgeting criteria to the awarding of public funding. This obligation shall be met through the appraisal of federally funded projects for gender equality, the development of quality criteria that meet the different needs of both sexes, the promotion of gender-balanced (model) projects, and the linking of public contract awards to equality measures in commercial enterprises.
- 18.4. The Government of Austria shall commission scientific studies on the effects of tax regulation on regional construction and settlement development and the actual related regional structural effects and/or secondary costs to the Government and the regions (interdisciplinary PhD scholarships with parallel research on traffic policy decisions).

Guideline 19: Incentivizing the construction of sustainable housing

Within the scope of its influence, the Government of Austria supports high-quality and affordable residential construction, through fiscal leverage, land use policy, and the responsible development of its own properties.

Stimulus program measure

- 19.1. When negotiating with the provinces, the Government of Austria shall advocate for a Federal Constitutional Law Article 15a agreement between the Government of Austria and the provinces on criteria for residential housing subsidies that define requirements and quality standards to ensure sustainable and viable housing construction and renovation measures.

Guideline 20: Fostering building culture collaboratively

The Government of Austria partners with provinces, municipalities, universities, unions, and advocacy groups to ensure the establishment of good building culture in Austria. It supports the implementation of these Building Culture Guidelines through all relevant structures and instruments. The Building Culture Guidelines will be continually evaluated and developed.

Stimulus program measures

- 20.1. The Government of Austria shall embed the topic of building culture through effective administration (strategic reports, target goals) and is committed to monitoring building culture throughout the agencies.
- 20.2. In cooperation with the provinces, the Government of Austria shall establish a program of implementation and consulting projects for municipalities to address building culture. The Government of Austria shall ensure scientific guidance and program evaluation.
- 20.3. On the advice of the Building Culture Advisory Board, the Government shall, in the future, examine which other measures or proposals from the pool of ideas to include in the stimulus program, and it will expand the program accordingly.

Drafting process and contributors

The current guidelines of the Government of Austria were derived in a complex participatory process at the initiative of the Building Culture Advisory Council, by order of the Federal Chancellery. They have been coordinated with the Third Austrian Building Culture Report III that was drawn up in parallel.

These topics, strategies, and implementation measures were developed with the participation of various specialized public authorities and submitted to a number of public participatory instruments for auditing and consultation. The paper is a product of the collaborative work of these process participants, as well as a national and international editorial team.

On June 28th, 2017, during the seventh session of its second term of office, the Building Culture Advisory Council unanimously approved the Government of Austria's Building Culture Guidelines and the stimulus program measures contained therein, as specified in this document.
At the recommendation of the Advisory Council, these Guidelines and accompanying stimulus program were adopted by the Government of Austria on August 22nd, 2017

