Skill Resilience 4EU

Changing Skills and Qualification Needs in the Food Sector in the Vulkanland

in the context of the digital and green transition

Focus Group
Moderation: Dr. Gesa Pflitsch & Meike Jungnickel, BOKU
17.09.2026, Gniebing, Styria

Funded by the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

Objectives and Agenda:
What do we want to achieve together today?

0 | Brief introduction

SkillResilience4EU & our work so far

1 | Reflecting on our findings together

A) Regional developments in **digitalisation and sustainability**

B) **Changing skill requirements and training** in the context of the digital and green transition

2 | Looking ahead
Challenges and opportunities for the region

Skill Resilience 4EU

A Short Introduction:
The “SkillResilience4EU” Project

- Programme: HORIZON RIA
- Duration: Jan. 2025 – Dec. 2027
- 10 partners from academia and practice

How can **regional labour markets** be shaped to ensure that the transformation towards the “Twin Transition” **is inclusive and sustainable**?



Skill Resilience 4EU

SkillResilience4EU:
Three Complementary Perspectives

(1) Regional Economic Geography & Labour Market Research
Broader analyses of regional labour markets and economic structures

(2) Innovation Management & Geographic Transformation Research
In-depth case studies in 13 selected regions and five sectors

(3) Practice Partners (Vocational Education and Training Providers, Municipalities)
Development and testing of practical tools and solutions

Skill Resilience 4EU

In-depth Case Studies: Reconstructing Institutional Transformations

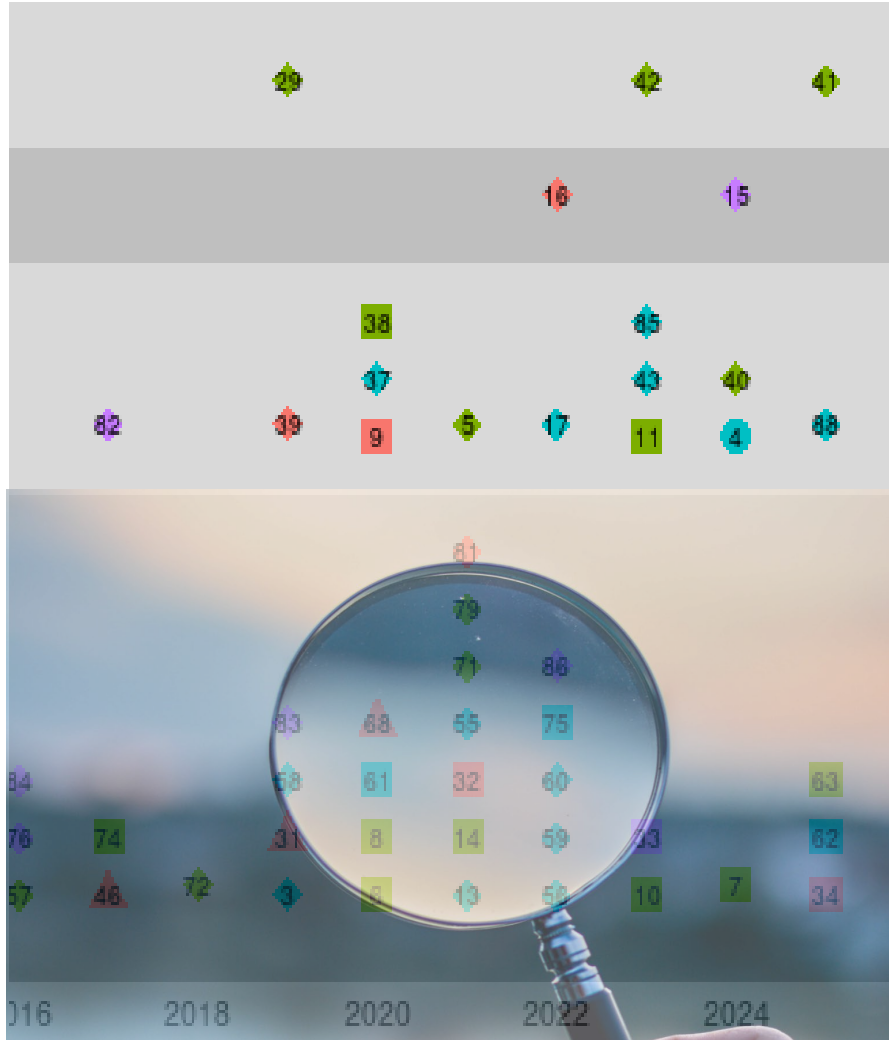
Data basis: Interviews + public documents

Reconstruction of key events: (e.g. new legislation, standards, networks) from a regional perspective, (~15–20 years)

→*What patterns emerge?*

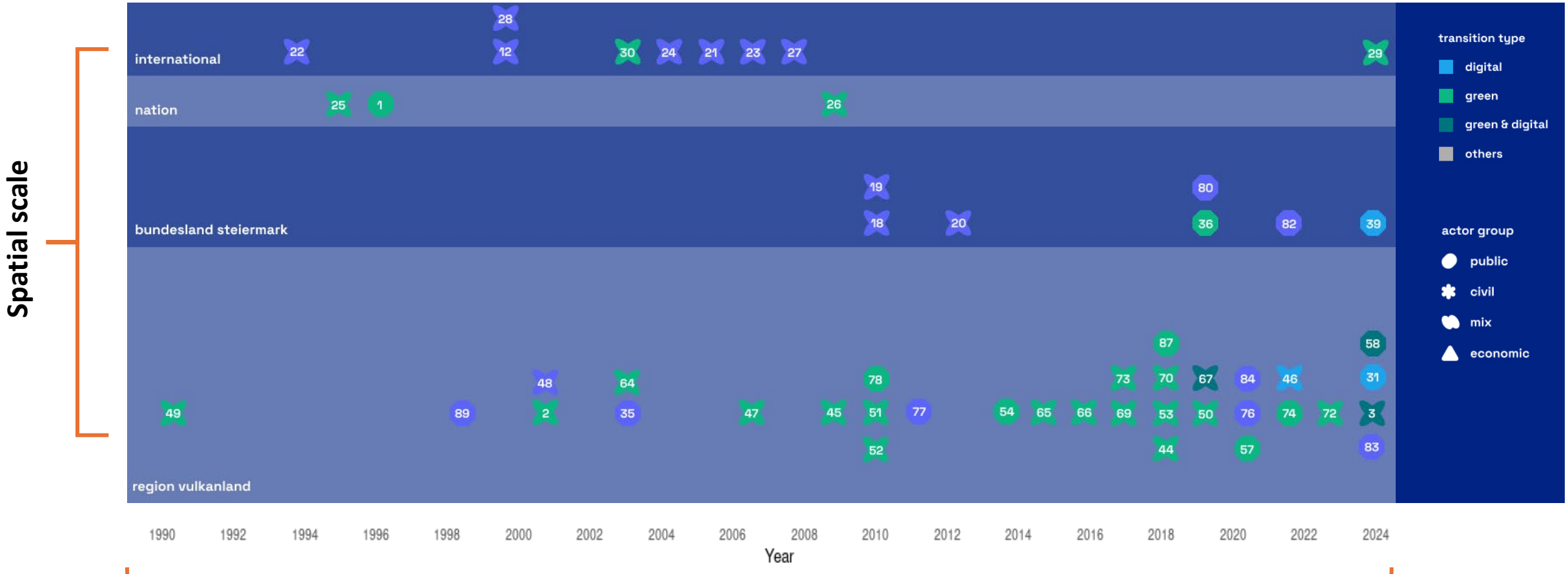
The story behind it: Who initiated these events, why did they emerge, and how do they continue to shape developments?

→ *What perceptions, values, or motives drive them?*



Skill Resilience 4EU

Example: Mapping Relevant Events



Skill Resilience 4EU

In-depth Case Studies: Reconstructing Institutional Transformations

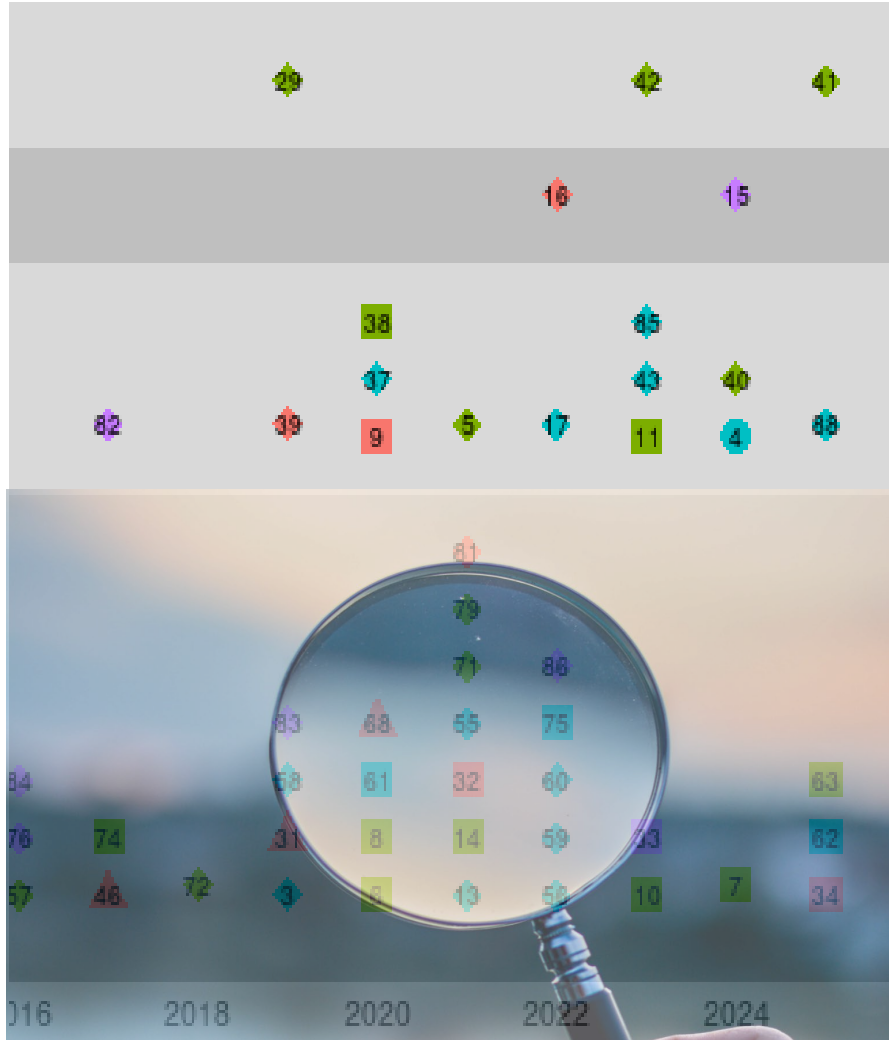
Data basis: Interviews + public documents

Reconstruction of key events: (e.g. new legislation, standards, networks) from a regional perspective, (~15–20 years)

→*What patterns emerge?*

The story behind it: Who initiated these events, why did they emerge, and how do they continue to shape developments?

→ *What perceptions, values, or motives drive them?*



Skill Resilience 4EU

Part 1 I A

How have digitalisation and sustainability developed in the food sector in the Vulkanland region and to what extent have the two become interconnected?

Skill Resilience 4EU

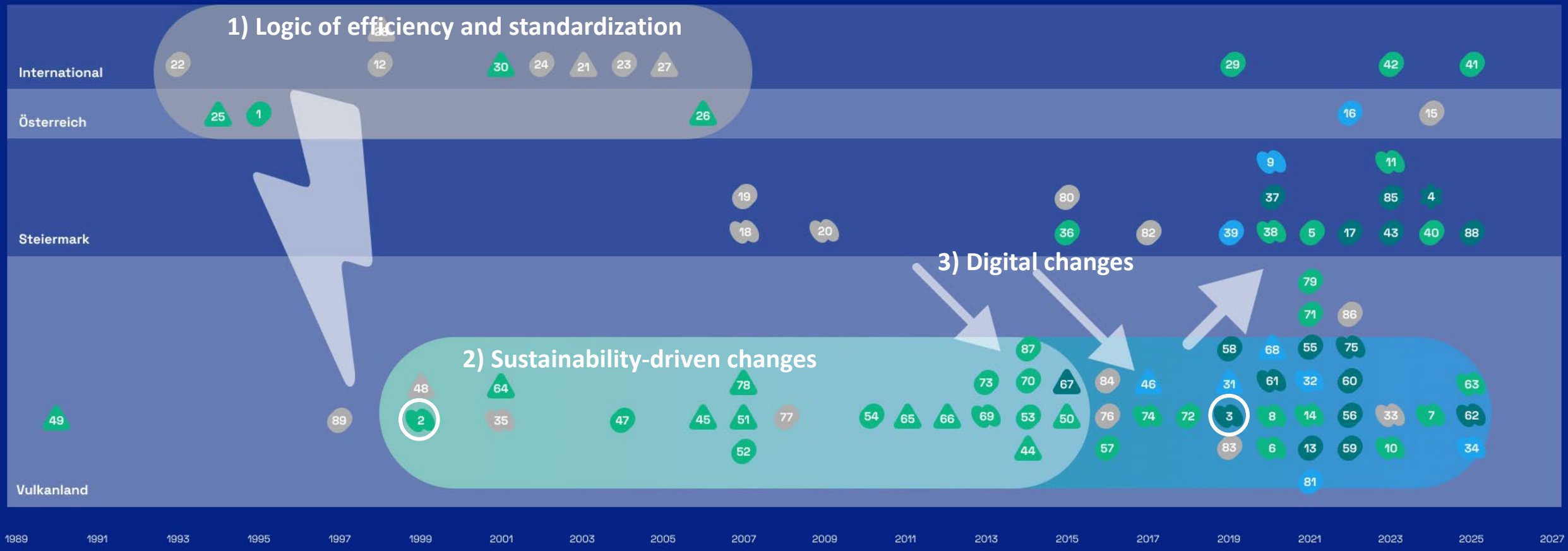
Regional Dynamics of the Twin Transition: Between Value Orientation and Digitalization

- **Sustainability Transformation:** Regionally coordinated and value-based, driven by regional development agencies and networks.
- **Digitalization:** Driven by sector-specific dynamics, particularly through standards and internal corporate processes.
- **Linkage:** Integration into existing networks; digitalization support is increasingly shifting to the Styrian level.

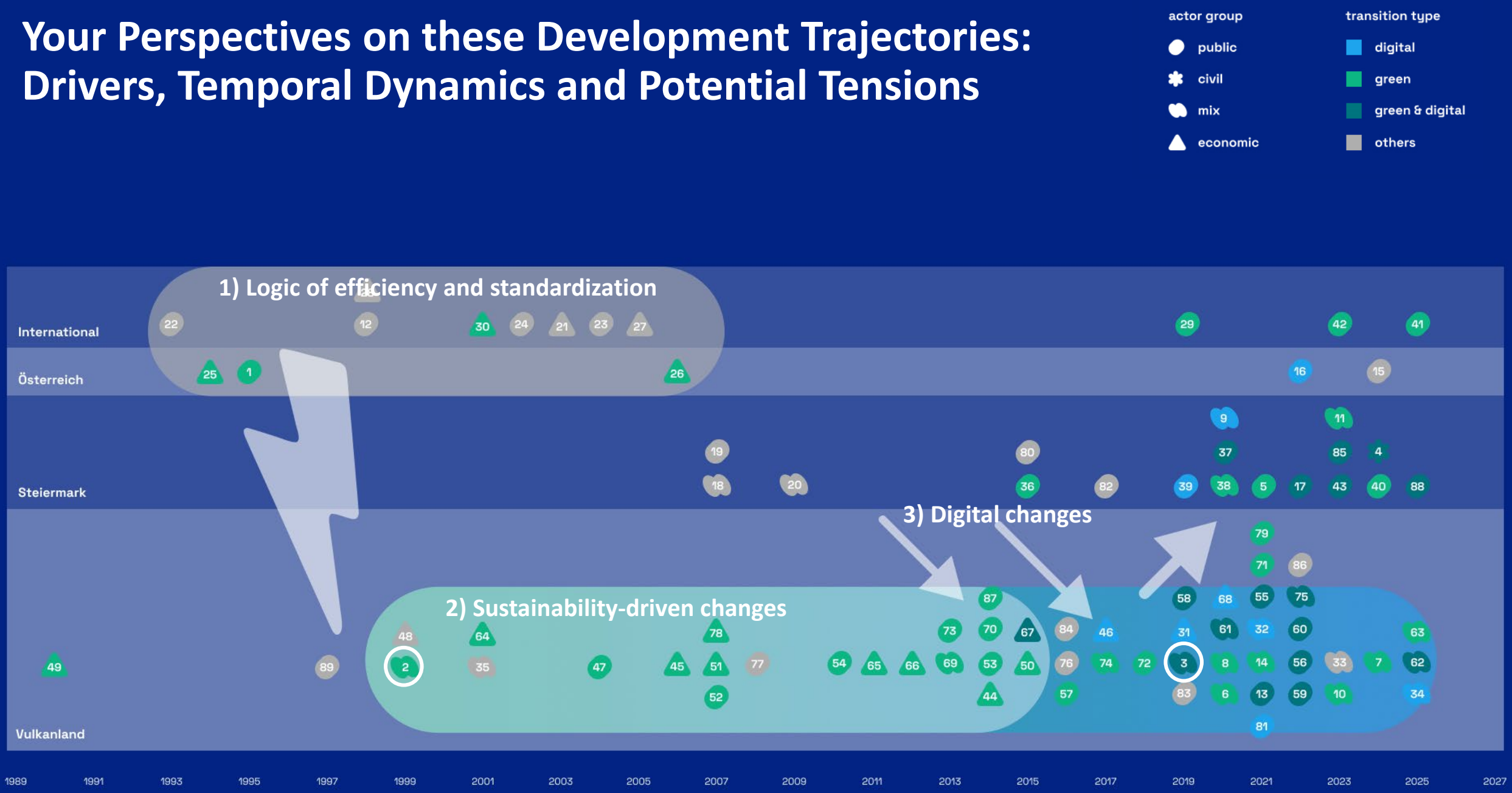
→ **How exactly has this developed?**

Skill Resilience 4EU

Changes in Digitalization and Sustainability in the Food Sector in the Vulkanland Region



Your Perspectives on these Development Trajectories: Drivers, Temporal Dynamics and Potential Tensions



Teil 1 I B

Welche neuen Qualifizierungsinitiativen sind auf regionaler Ebene im Kontext von Digitalisierung und Nachhaltigkeit im Vulkanland entstanden und inwiefern decken sie den sich wandelnden Kompetenzbedarf?

Skill Resilience 4EU

Upskilling Dynamics in the Context of the Twin Transition: Sustainability Orientation & Demand for Digital Further Training

- **Upskilling:** Sustainability-related initiatives emerged early and are regionally embedded, but are predominantly located outside the formal education system.
- **Skills Needs:** Growing shortages of technical skilled workers and an urgent need for digitalization.
- **Further Training:** The need has been recognized, but systematic training offerings are still lacking, particularly with regard to digitalization and the Twin Transition.

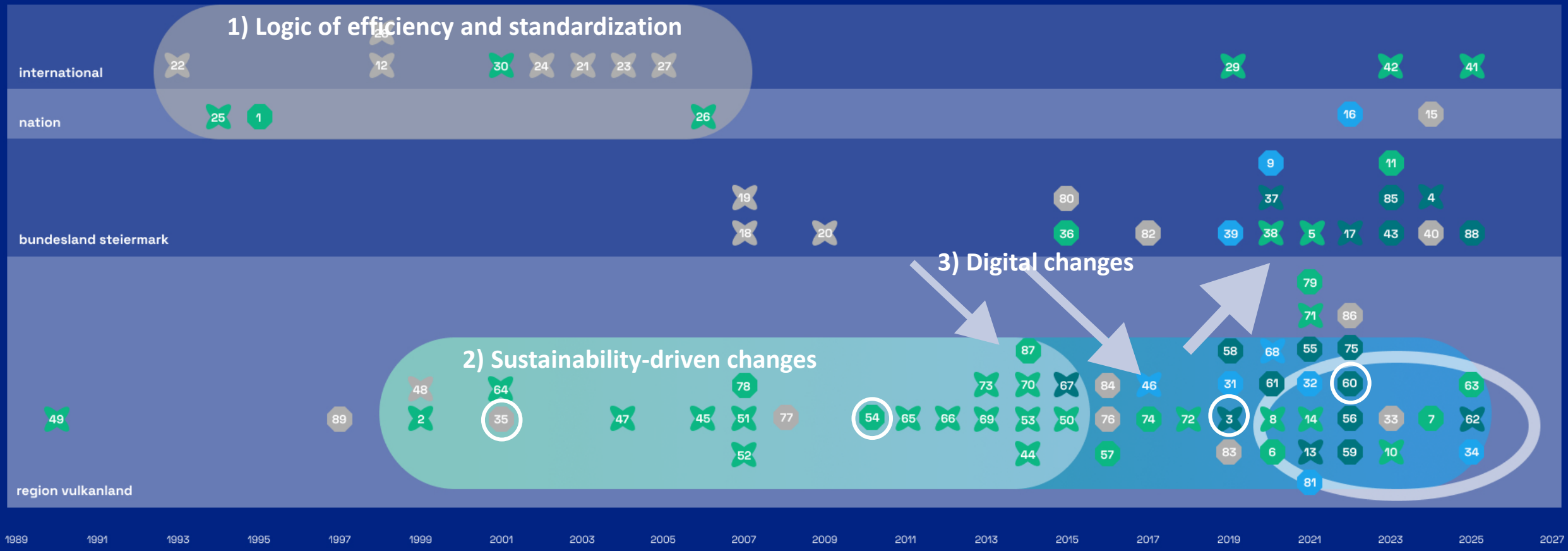
→ How exactly has this evolved?

not skill-related
skill-related

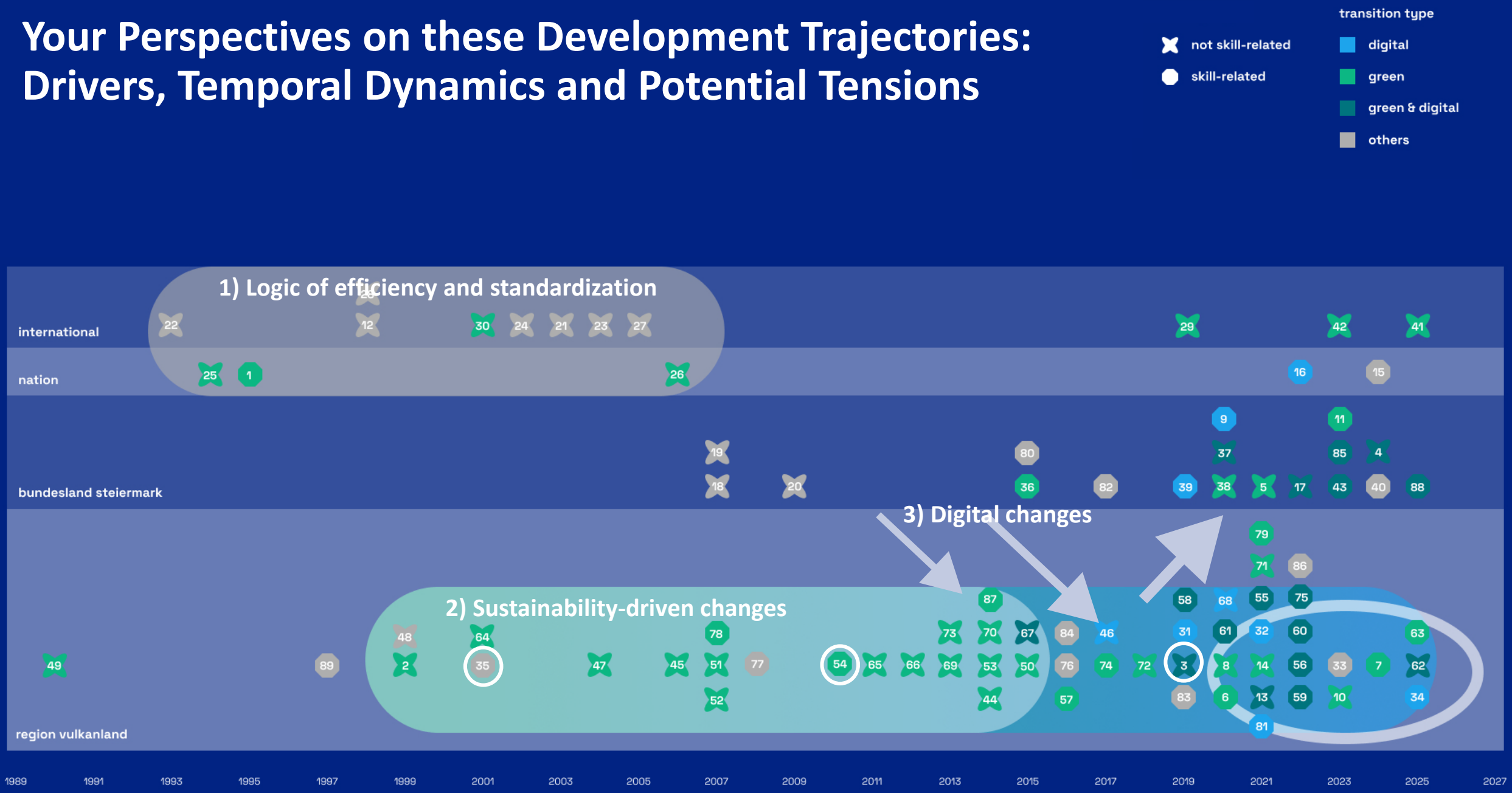
transition type
digital
green
green & digital
others

Skill Resilience 4EU

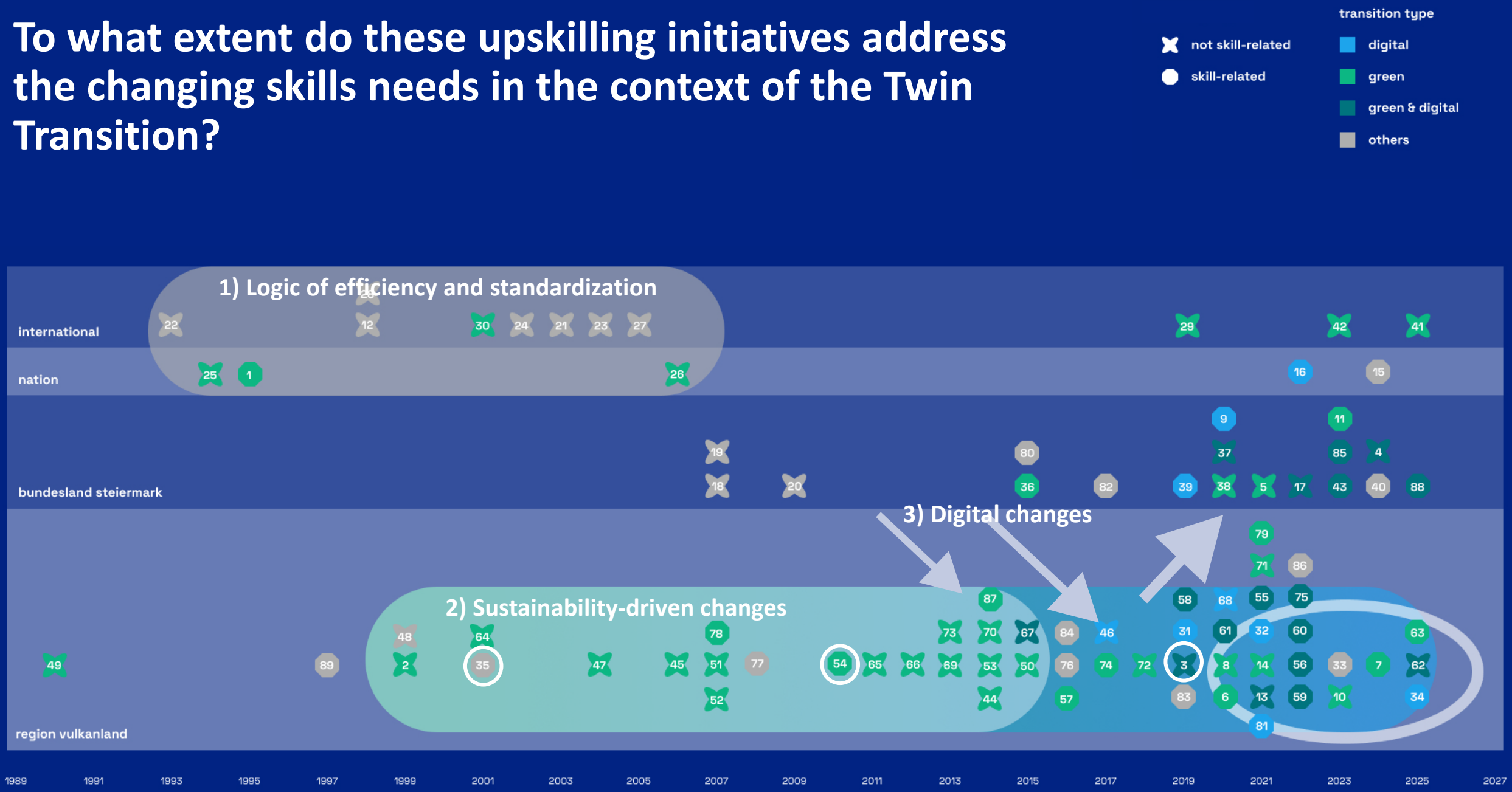
Changes in Changes in Skills and Qualification in the Food Sector in the Vulkanland Region



Your Perspectives on these Development Trajectories: Drivers, Temporal Dynamics and Potential Tensions



To what extent do these upskilling initiatives address the changing skills needs in the context of the Twin Transition?



Part 1 I B

What new qualification initiatives have emerged in the Food Sector in the Vulkanland Region in the context of digitalisation and sustainability, and to what extent do they address changing skill needs?

Skill Resilience 4EU

Part 2:

What challenges and opportunities for the region can we identify based on the insights we have just discussed?

Skill Resilience 4EU

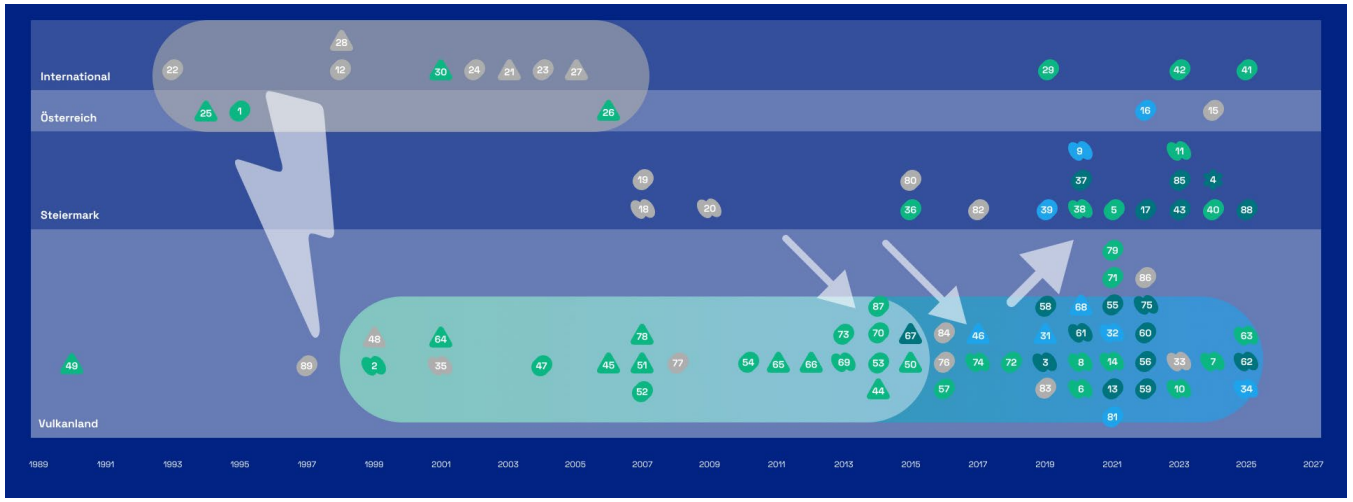
Looking Back, Moving Forward:
Where Do We Go from Here?

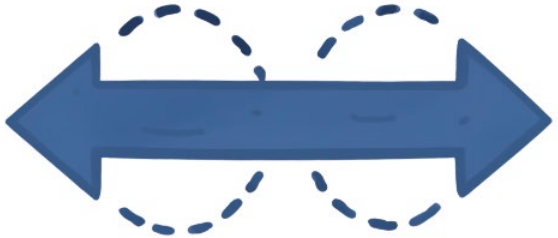
From your perspective:

Which developments are **already working well**,

which **promising approaches** should be strengthened / developed,

and where do you see a **need for change** or further action?

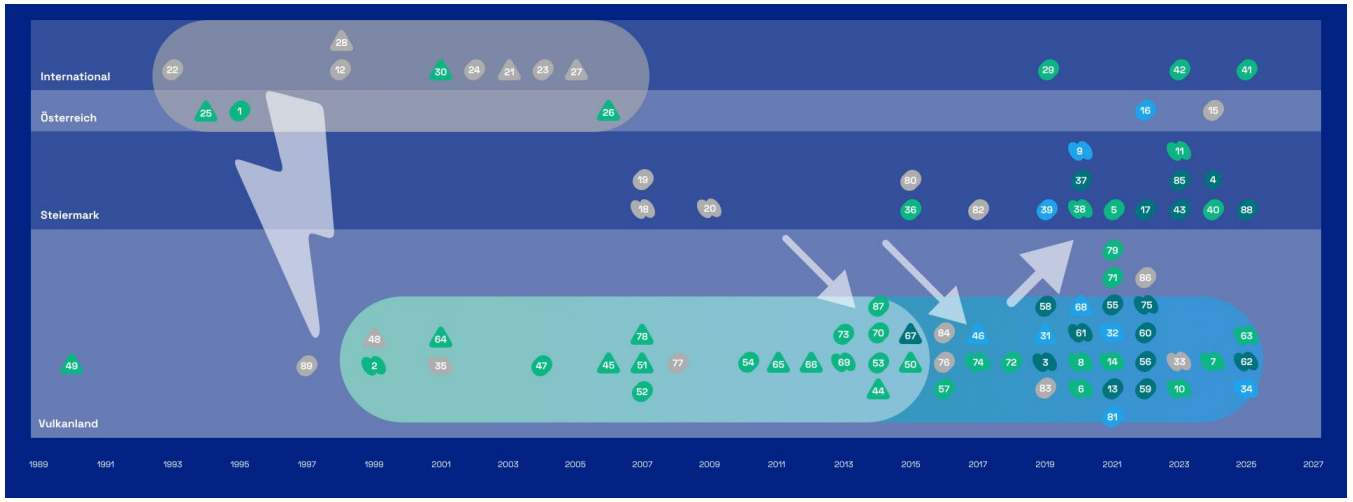




Looking Ahead:
What Can the Region Influence?

What **opportunities** does the **region** have to shape developments in skills and qualification, sustainability, and digitalisation itself, and where does it face dependencies?

In particular, with regard to **other levels of governance**, such as the regional state, the national government, or the EU.





Looking Ahead:
Who Can and Should Contribute?

Who - **within the region -** can or should play an **important role** in driving these developments forward?

What **roles** can these people or organisations play in driving these developments forward? For example, they can:

- set their own initiatives and impulses
- respond to and translate broader developments at the regional level
- coordinate different stakeholders
- develop and advance joint approaches
- …



Skill Resilience 4EU

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

Is there anything we haven't discussed today that you feel is important?



Skill Resilience 4EU

Thank you very much for your participation!

Further information about the project can be found at:
https://skillresilience4eu.eu/

Contact:
gesa.pflitsch@boku.ac.at
meike.jungnickel@boku.ac.at

Skill Resilience 4EU