

Sound economy

Germany's world-famous *Mittelstand* dominates the Schleswig-Holstein economy with these small to mid-sized businesses ensuring its on-going sound development. Even in stormy times, Schleswig-Holstein has proved much less prone to economic ups-and-downs than most other German states.

More than three quarters of the Schleswig-Holstein labour force work in small and mid-sized businesses – more than the national average. In all, 120,000 firms employ some 600,000 people. The *Mittelstand* has undoubtedly been the driving force behind the upswing in Schleswig-Holstein, as is reflected in the GDP figures for German states. Schleswig-Holstein's growth rate (1.1%) was well above the national average from 2008 to 2010, putting the state fourth in the German growth table for this three-year period.

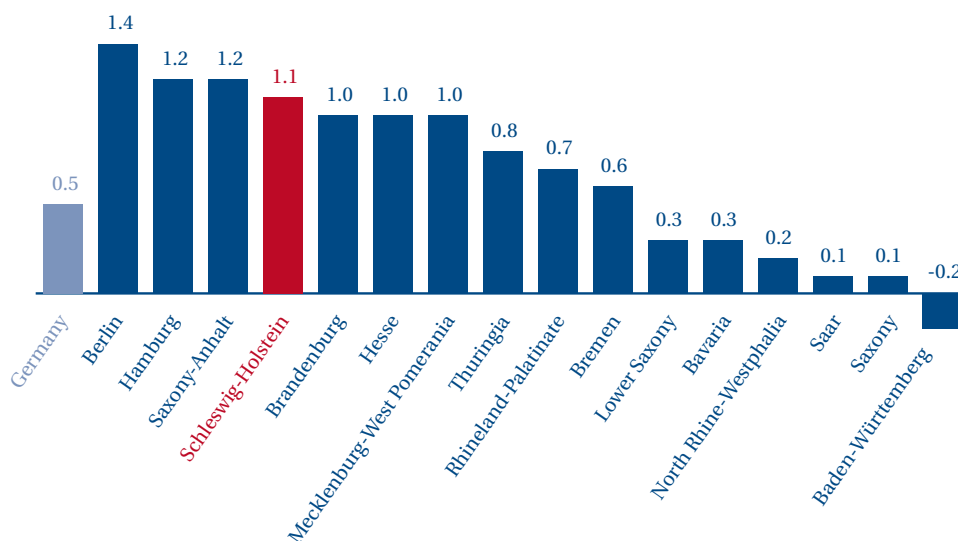
In addition, the state government is consistently supporting sunrise industries through its *Mittelstand* Offensive for Growth and Jobs – a programme that includes supporting strong networks to further collaboration between business, academia and research facilities in Schleswig-Holstein. The focus here is on key industries and clusters with the greatest growth potential:

- **Food:** 270 businesses and 19,400 employees
- **Information and communications technology:** 20,000 businesses and 39,000 employees
- **Life sciences/health care:** 275 businesses and 172,000 employees
- **Logistics:** 3,000 businesses and 50,600 employees
- **Maritime sector:** 1,700 businesses and 47,000 employees
- **Renewable energies:** 100 businesses and 7,000 employees
- **Mechanical/electrical engineering:** 385 businesses and 40,000 employees

At the same time, the state government has launched a programme to safeguard the future supply of skilled labour and thus lay firm foundations for the on-going growth of Schleswig-Holstein's economy.

GDP by German states

Average year-on-year growth, 2008-2010



Source: Germany's Statistical Offices, as per February 2011