

Protective Forests in Austria

Policy Framework and Challenges in the Future

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Austria – an alpine country

- 2/3 of the whole country Alpine
- 37 % of area available for permanent settlement (esp. valleys and low land regions)



Forests protect against Natural Hazards

Avalanches, Rockfall, Land slides, Flood Retention, Debris flows,...



Austrian Forest Act 1975 §21f

- Regulates a differentiated use of the forest
- Defines the **Protective Forest** very precisely
 - **Site protective forest**
 - **Object protective forest**
 - **Protective forest by regulatory decree**
- Includes special treatment of the Protective Forest
- High public interest in the management of a stable, sustainable Protective Forest

Players in the Austrian Protective Forests

- Forest owners – Beneficiaries (houseowner, agriculture, municipality, road operators, infrastructure operators)
- District forestry authority
- State Forestry Directorate (9 federal states in Austria)
- Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism – Department
Torrent and Avalanche Control and Protective Forest Policy
 - Torrent and Avalanche Control as an executive body
- ALSO: Hunters, Tourism, Recreational,...

Challenges in the Protective Forest

- Structural overaging
- Missing regeneration
- Steep slopes, hard-to-reach locations
- High game levels → High susceptibility to game damage
- Missing economic incentives by forest owners
- Pressure on the forest from tourism and recreation → means great stress for the game
- **CLIMATE CHANGE:** increased temperature, wheater extremes, increased risk of forests fires, changing site conditions → changes in forest composition

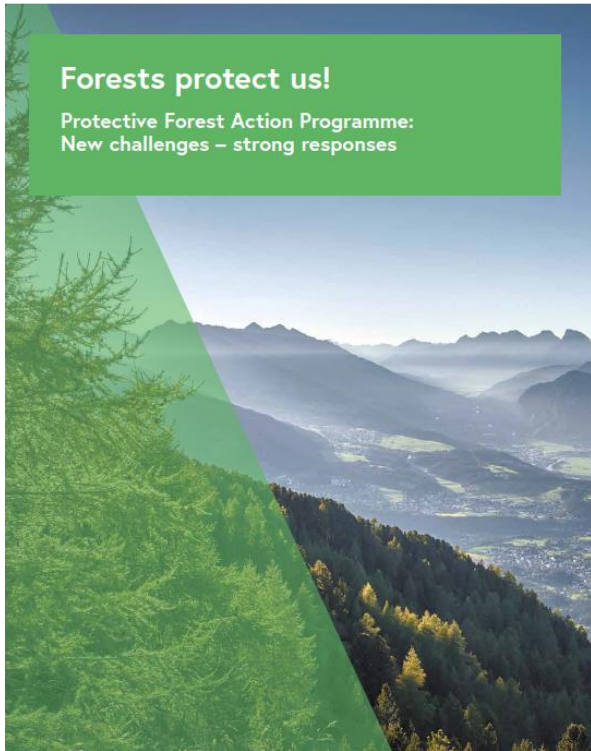








Protective Forest Action Programme






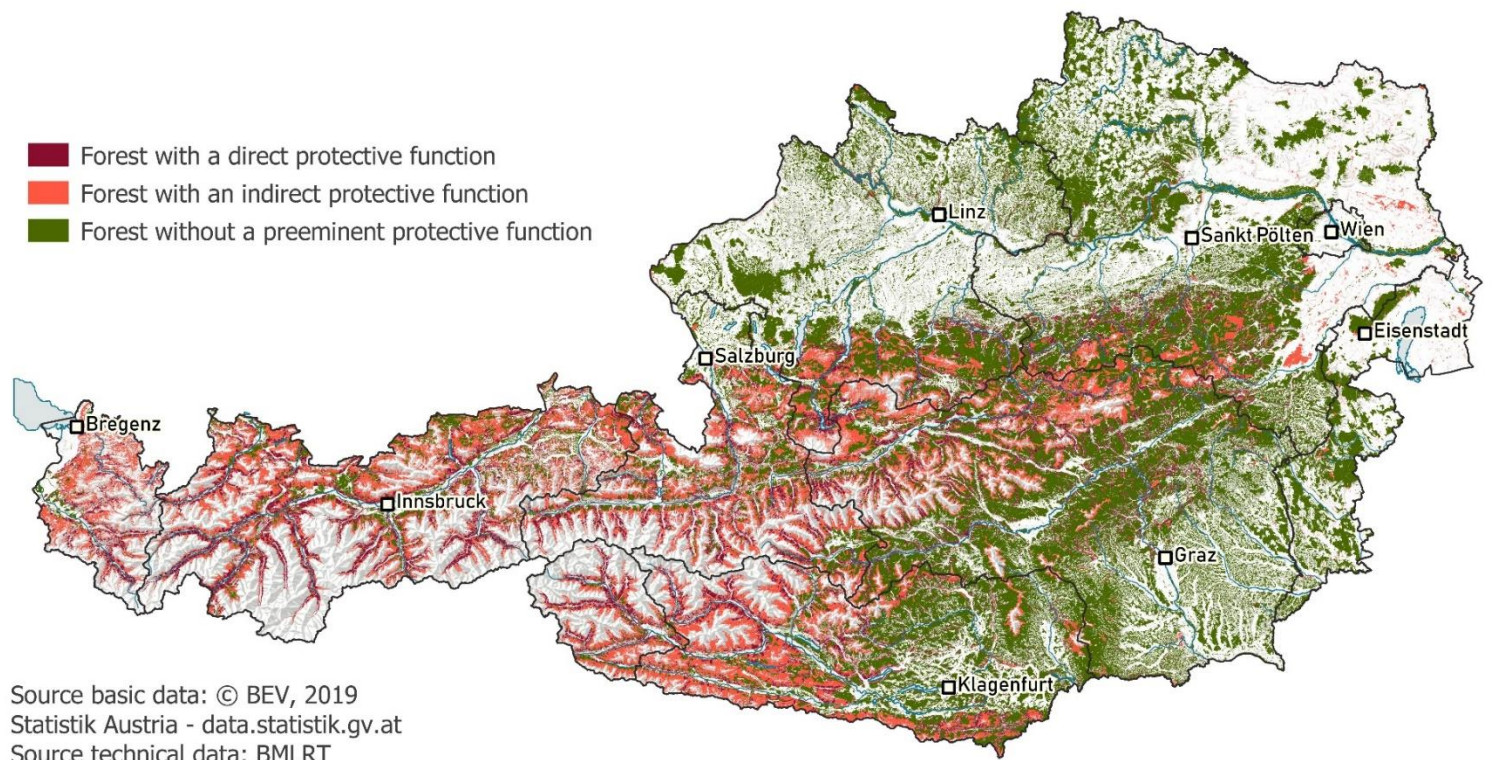
4 target corridors, 10 flagship measures and 35 milestones

- Improve the Protective Function and Effect of Forests
- Consideration of i.e. climate change, demographics, land use, structural changes
- Nation-wide setting of measures
- Strengthen societal relevance, including tourism, hunters, municipalities etc.
- Awareness raising and Training
- Research focus on protective forests: forest genetics, climate dynamics, economy and ecology

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Agriculture, Regions
and Tourism

Protective forest cover in Austria

-  Forest with a direct protective function
-  Forest with an indirect protective function
-  Forest without a preeminent protective function



Source basic data: © BEV, 2019
Statistik Austria - data.statistik.gv.at
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0 50 100 km



Land management projects

- Executed by the Federal Torrent and Avalanche Control
- Long-time projects (15-30 years)
- In forest areas with a high natural hazard potential
- Especially in Object-Protective Forests
- Financing by the public sector BUT also by contributions from interested parties (house owner, infrastructure operator)
- Combination of technical and biological measures





Thank you for your attention!

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