Upper Austrian Environmental Report 2018



Brief Summary

OUR ENVIRONMENT OUR COMMITMENT OUR FUTURE



THE UPPER AUSTRIAN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2018

Environment 2030: Charting a steady course together with the "Kurs: Umwelt 2030" programme

The UN plan of action "Transforming our world – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) sets guidelines for achieving sustainable development. Through a broad range of measures and activities, Upper Austria is showing its clear commitment to implementing the new global sustainability goals as evidenced by the state's environmental programme "Kurs: Umwelt 2030". Upper Austria is on course to a liveable and sustainable future, as confirmed also by the environmental report on hand.

Layout and structure of the environmental report

The Upper Austrian Environmental Report 2018 contains facts and figures plotting the development of our environment in the period between 2012 and 2017 and looks ahead to future challenges. It follows on from the 2012 Environmental Report.

The report must be drawn up every six years in accordance with the Upper Austrian Environmental Protection Act and submitted to the Upper Austrian Parliament. Some 50 authors from 13 departments of the Office of the State Government of Upper Austria collaborated on an interdisciplinary basis on elaborating the Upper Austrian Environmental Report.

Each environmental topic is dealt with in a separate section and looks at:

- The long-term perspective as a means of orientation
- The current situation in Upper Austria in terms of
- Projects and activities as well as
- Funding and the
- Next steps
- Links and references to further information
- A listing of legal and technical principles

The most important goals and priority areas for each environmental topic are listed clearly in the Annex along with a summary of the funding and organisation of environmental protection in Upper Austria.

State environmental programme: environmental guidelines up to 2030 and orientation framework for the environmental report

In a broad-based participation programme in line with the motto "All to play for - it's your future!" ("Es geht ums Ganzegestalte deine Zukunft"), citizens collaborated for the first time to draw up a new state environmental programme. They were able to contribute opinions, fears, expectations and ideas concerning the ecological future of our federal state in the framework of citizens' councils and a youth council. In addition to participation by citizens, the development process was primarily underpinned by the involvement of stakeholders as well as input from science and administration. The state environmental programme **"Kurs: Umwelt 2030"** defines its environmental guidelines in the form of medium and long-term goals and principles for how the state intends to respond to developments in the coming years in relation to the environment.

In terms of structure and content, the 2018 Environmental Report is based on the state environmental programme "Kurs: Umwelt 2030" with its six topic areas.

The fruits of six years' labour to protect our basis for living

Upper Austria is a federal state with a high quality of life. To preserve this high quality of life, we want to work together to protect and safeguard our valuable resources of air, soil and water. "We" in this sense means politics and administration together with the people in Upper Austria.

We strive to achieve a balance between ecology, economy, people and society to ensure Upper Austria continues to be a top region with a high quality of life.

UPPER AUSTRIA – PRESERVING AN ENVIRONMENT WORTH LIVING IN

Topic area 1



One of the major challenges of our time is the preservation and protection of air, soil and water. These three elements are not only basic needs for us as people, but also for animals and plant life and are thus the basis for our entire eco-system.

It is generally recognised that air and water are worth protecting. The fact that **soil** is also a limited and precious resource only became obvious to many people because of the continuous building of awareness in recent years. 56 communities, three businesses and one school are now members of the Upper Austrian Soil Alliance. Digital maps for evaluating soil function have been available since 2013 and provide a means of illustrating the capabilities of soils. For example, the maps show which soils are good for agricultural use or which contribute especially to regulating run-off after heavy rainfall events.

This is an especially important function in **terms of climate change.** Its consequences are also being felt in Upper Austria where, for example, heatwaves and heavy rain events have increased dramatically. The Upper Austrian climate change adaptation strategy, which was drafted on an interdisciplinary basis in 2013, shows ways we can prepare for the changes that are predicted to come. The aim is to limit the rise in global temperature to significantly less than 2 degrees Celsius (since the industrial revolution) in order to minimise the consequences of climate change and therefore ensure the adjustment measures are as effective as possible. Thanks to the ambitious climate protection policy, greenhouse gas emissions in Upper Austria have fallen in the years since 1990 by 53 percent in the energy sector and by 46 percent in the building sector.

Success has been recorded in relation to classic **air pollutants** too. The number of days when dust levels were exceeded fell from 47 days in 2011 to 25 days in 2017, with only 9 days in 2016. Not only are up-to-date results of air quality measurements available to citizens online, but also predictions and scenarios for trends in relation to climate and air quality.

Regular measurements and analyses are also critical in the area of natural and artificial **radiation**. Special emphasis is

placed on radon in this respect in Upper Austria, since this natural radionuclide proportionally causes the greatest radiation exposure per capita and year. The official experts regularly check radiation sources and provide information and advice for target groups in the form of brochures or events, for example, in order to protect people and the environment against artificial and natural radiation. The increasing level of light pollution is not regarded as radiation exposure in the classic sense but is likewise damaging for human health and the environment. The light measurement network ("Lichtmessnetz") and light register illustrate the night sky brightness impressively. The Austrian outdoor lighting guidelines ("Österreichischer Leitfaden Außenbeleuchtung") propose solutions for developing improved lighting, which does not illuminate the sky unnecessarily and waste energy. As a trailblazer in this area, Upper Austria was responsible for coordinating these guidelines, which apply throughout all federal states. These solutions are already being implemented by selected sample communities to illustrate lighting in the future.

In our **rivers and lakes**, the water quality has improved. The major investments **in wastewater management** are showing a sustainable impact. Some waters, however, are still polluted by nutrient inputs from agriculture. The ecological status remains in serious need of remediation as a result of regulations and hydropower use. Renaturation and passability measures for fish in waterways are being implemented.

Creating awareness is the key in many areas to inspire people to be open and embrace environmentally friendly behaviour. Continuous enhancement of educational contents and formats is called for in this respect in order to reach the respective target groups. The action programme "Environment: Play:Space" ("Umwelt:Spiel:Raum") was developed in 2016 to encourage interest in environmental topics on the part of our children and young people. Unrestricted access to sound environmental data – for example in the form of open data – is a key aspect of transparent environmental information, which involves people and allows them to actively contribute to protecting our basis for living. RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT AND CONSUMPTION

By following the guiding principle that "waste is valuable", the Upper Austrian Waste Management Plan 2017 provides a framework for enhanced development of **waste management** in Upper Austria on the path towards the modern recycling economy. Important priorities include waste prevention and reuse strategies, optimised waste management structures as well as high-quality and environmentally compatible collection, recovery and treatment methods. We are top performers across Austria when it comes to waste separation at a rate of 72 percent. Projects such as "ReVital" or information campaigns play an important role in this success.

Upper Austria is the top economic state. More than 10,000 **plant permit proceedings** or proceedings according to the Waste Management Act and the Environmental Impact Analysis Act were carried out in the period under review. The high-quality and rapid processing of the proceedings contributes enormously to strengthening Upper Austria as a business location.

(Fig. 1) Trends in plant permit proceedings

Simplification of proceedings; Source: Department of Plant, Environmental and Water Law (AUWR)





Completed plant permit proceedings

(First Instance) under commercial law:

Topic area 2

ECOLOGICAL AND HEALTHY NUTRITION

Upper Austrians are attaching increasing importance to ecological and healthy eating. This can be seen not least in the successful growth of **organic farming.** 4,367 organic farms in Upper Austria cultivate an area of 84,080 hectares of utilisable agricultural land. Advisory programmes and grants help with the transition to organic farming.

In relation to agricultural seeds and plants for Upper Austria's fields, **genetically** modified organisms are consciously and voluntarily avoided. The EU supports this right of self-determination not least through the initiatives of the network of GMO-free regions in Europe. The network, which was co-founded by Upper Austria, now has 64 members.

The population of Upper Austria values clean **drinking water** enormously. 450 new protected areas and the Department of Soil, Water, Conservation & Consultancy are responsible, among others, for ensuring the good quality of our groundwater.

(Fig. 1) Organic farming in Upper Austria

Development of farms and land from 1991 to 2016; Source: Upper Austrian Chamber of Agriculture



Topic area 3

Topic area 4

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING AND LIVING

Foresighted and prudent **spatial planning** is essential for the sustainable development of our federal state. Economy, quality of living, environmental protection and nature conservation and last but not least mobility are closely linked with state development. Attention is focused primarily at present on corridor studies for planning a geographically compatible transport infrastructure and intensification of inter-communal spatial development in rapidly developing regions.

In the area of **residential building**, the primary focus is on energy and resource conservation, taking social aspects into consideration. The implementation of the EU building directive, which focuses on the integrated evaluation of a building's energy efficiency, plays a major role in this respect.

Noise insulation has to be considered as early as in the spatial planning stage and then subsequently in residential building, in order to minimise traffic noise and noise from neighbouring apartments. Good **room acoustics** also contribute essentially to living quality. The online room acoustic calculator can be used to assess the acoustic quality of one's own living space and rate the success of the improvement measures.



(Fig. 1) Noise disturbance in the residential area

Evaluation for Upper Austria; Source: Microcensus reports 1998 - 2015

- Neighbouring apartment
- Other sources of noise (building sites, pubs and restaurants, ...)
- Traffic noise
- No noise disturbance



Acoustic measurement; Source: Province of Upper Austria, Zeitlhofer

Percentage of persons in Upper Austria



Topic area 5

DESIGNING MOBILITY IN HARMONY WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable transport development is another important factor for quality of life in our federal state. Regional transport concepts have enabled positive development in recent years. As further concepts are implemented, **environmentally compatible mobility types,** such as public transport and cycling and walking, will receive even greater impetus in future.





Mobility concepts should contribute to a shift in the "modal split" in the direction of environmentally compatible means of transport. Source: Province of Upper Austria, Markowetz

(Fig. 1) Distribution of modes of transport as a percentage Mobility of Upper Austrian population on an average working day.



ALIGNING INFRASTRUCTURE IN AN ENVIRONMENT—DRIVEN AND CRISIS—PROOF MANNER

Topic area 6



Not only does the infrastructure have to be aligned to the needs of people, the economy and the environment in terms of transport, but also in regard to energy supply, drinking water supply and wastewater disposal. Current and future challenges, such as climate change and security of supply, have to be taken into account. Upper Austria will use its new **energy strategy** "Energie-Leitregion OÖ 2050" (Upper Austria as Top Energy Region 2050) to make sure it is well equipped to deal with precisely these challenges. In addition to targets for energy efficiency and renewable energies, the strategy also includes equally important objectives in the areas of security of supply, competitiveness, location and innovation as well as acceptance.

The priority in terms of **drinking water supply and wastewater disposal** is to further expand the supply and waste management network and redevelop the existing infrastructure. Cooperations and advisory programmes launched by the Department of Soil, Water, Conservation & Consultancy ensure a balance of interests between water utilities and land users.

Protection against natural hazards is gaining increasing importance in the area of climate change. The Machland Dam passed its practical test in the flood of 2013. In addition to

other constructional measures, attention is focused on enhanced development of information systems for combating natural hazards. Measures such as flood risk management, the designation of hazardous areas and risk areas and the new website of the Hydrographic Service with forecasts for floods and avalanches allow better planning and preparation for such potential events in future.



Legal info

Publisher and owner of media:

Office of the Upper Austrian Provincial Government, Directorate of Environment and Water Management, Environmental Protection Department, Kärntnerstraße 10-12, 4021 Linz Tel.: (+43 732) 77 20-145 01, Fax: (+43 732) 77 20- 21 45 49, E-mail: us-kundenbuero.post@ooe.gv.at www.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at **Content:** Director HR Dr Ulrike Jäger-Urban, Director Mag. Helmut Ilk, Director Dr Günther Knötig, State Presidential Director Mag.a Antonia Licka, Director Dr Gottfried Schindlbauer, Director HR Dr Matthias Stöger Editorial: Mag. Rainer Widmann, Evelyn Sixtl, Berta Adelsburg, Ing. Bettina Casagrande, Ulrike Hartmaier, Regina Kalchmair Edited by: Helmut Maresch Translation: beo Gesellschaft für Sprachen und Technologie mbH Illustrations: Uwe Mayer Illustration Graphics: Fredmansky GmbH Print: TRAUNER DRUCK GmbH & Co KG 1st edition, June 2018

Data protection information can be found at: **www.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at/datenschutz** The Upper Austrian Environmental Report 2018 on the Internet: **www.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at**