



# Austria

## National Report on Mountain Ecosystems



# Annex I

## FORMAT FOR THEMATIC REPORT ON MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS

The following format for preparing a thematic report on mountain ecosystems is a series of questions designed to collect information from Contracting Parties to facilitate the consideration of relevant issues and programme of work at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The responses to these questions will also assist with the assessment of the overall status of implementation of the Convention.

The questions are designed in a way to facilitate completion of the review. In most cases, optional answers are provided and only a tick in one or more boxes is required. Following the questions there is a box for further comments and information. Parties are invited to provide a more detailed response to the questions to which more than one answer is given. In particular, this box could be used to identify the priorities in the national strategies and action plans, successes and constraints in implementation and existing and potential areas of cooperation and capacity-building.

This information provided by Contracting Parties will not be used to rank performance between individual Contracting Parties.

In order to assist with the review and synthesis of the information in the reports, respondents are asked to ensure that the further information provided in the box is closely related to the preceding questions and is as succinct as possible. This is no set limit on length, but it is anticipated that Parties will be able to provide adequate and useful information in a few pages.

Contracting Parties are also invited to communicate any issues relevant to the provisions of the Convention that have not been addressed by the questions below. The Executive Secretary would also welcome any comments on the adequacy of the questions, and difficulties in completing these questions, and any recommendations on how these reporting guidelines and questions could be improved.

It is recommended that Contracting Parties involve a wide range of stakeholders in the preparation of the report, in order to ensure a participatory and transparent development of such a report. A box is provided to identify those stakeholders who have been involved in this process.

Contracting Parties are requested to submit their thematic reports on mountain ecosystems in this format to the Executive Secretary by 31 October 2002. Parties are requested to submit an original signed copy by post and an electronic copy on diskette or by electronic mail. An electronic version of this document will be sent to all national focal points and this will also be available from the website of the Convention at:

<http://www.biodiv.org>

Completed thematic reports and any comments should be sent to:

The Executive Secretary Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

World Trade Center

393 St. Jacques Street, Suite 300 Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2Y 1N9

Fax: 1-514-2886588

Email: [secretariat@biodiv.org](mailto:secretariat@biodiv.org)

Please provide the following details on the origin of this report

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Signature of officer responsible for submitting national report:	Gabriele Obermayr mp
Date of submission:	31 October 2002

**Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report**

<p><u>Information on process by which report has been prepared:</u></p> <p>The Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management invited experts and the members of the Austrian National Biodiversity Commission to participate in the preparation, coordination and final discussion of this questionnaire.</p> <p>The National Biodiversity Commission was entrusted by the Federal Ministry of Environment in 1996 to coordinate and harmonize the numerous activities and programmes and to promote the flow and exchange of information in the field of biodiversity, as well as to discuss and co-ordinate issues related to the CBD. This commission is composed of representatives from administrative authorities (Federal Ministries and Provincial Governments), social and economic interest groups (e.g. land owner associations, Federal Chamber of Commerce), science (e.g. universities) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).</p> <p><u>Materials used:</u></p> <p>Various studies, e.g.: "Hemeroby of Austrian Forest Ecosystems", (Grabherr et al. 1998); Case study "The Ecosystem Approach and Forest Ecosystems in Austria" (not published yet); OECD Case Study "Biodiversity, Landscapes and Ecosystem Services of Agriculture and Forestry in the Austrian Alpine Region – An Approach to Economic Evaluation";</p> <p>Information drawn from websites : <a href="http://www.biodiv.at">www.biodiv.at</a>; <a href="http://www.berge2002.at">www.berge2002.at</a>; <a href="http://www.fbva.forvie.ac.at">www.fbva.forvie.ac.at</a>;</p>
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### Mountain Ecosystems

<b>1. What is the relative priority your country accords to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?</b>			
a) High	x	b) Medium	c) Low
<b>2. How does your country assess the resources available for conservation and sustainable use of</b>			

biological diversity in mountain ecosystems , both domestic and international?				
a) Good	x	b) Adequate	c) Limiting	d) Severely limiting
<b>3. Has your country requested financial assistance from GEF for funding the activities for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?</b>				
a) no	x			
b) yes , please provide details				

### Assessment, Identification and Monitoring

<b>4. Has your country undertaken any assessment of direct and underlying causes of degradation and loss of biological diversity of mountain ecosystems?</b>	
a) no (please specify the reasons)	
b) yes, please specify major threats and their relative importance, as well as gaps	(no ranking) Climate change; soil degradation; grazing (game and farm animals); fragmentation of habitats; silvicultural measures; changes in land use (e.g. loss of traditional pasture management); erosion; traffic & tourism;
c) If yes, please specify the measures your country has taken to control the causes of loss of mountain biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>GLORIA</u> (Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environment): Monitoring of possible impacts of climate change upon biodiversity patterns in high mountain ecosystems.</li> <li>• <u>IGBP</u>: Alpine Indicators of Climate Change</li> <li>• Funding of traditional management practices</li> <li>• Development of management plans</li> <li>• <u>Alpine Convention</u> (details see below): An Alpine Monitoring and Information System was arranged to foster and to coordinate the activities of the Parties.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Has your country identified taxonomic needs for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity of mountain ecosystems?</b>	
a) no, (please specify the reasons)	
b) yes, please specify	Conservation of endemic species and geographical variations, improvement of natural habitats by selective management
<b>6. Has your country made any assessment of the vulnerability or fragility of the mountains in your country?</b>	
a) no, please specify the reasons	
b) yes, please specify the results and observed impacts on mountain biodiversity	

<p><b>7. Has your country made any assessment important for conservation of biological diversity of mountain ecosystems at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels? (You may wish to use the Annex I of the Convention for categories of biodiversity important for conservation)</b></p>	
a) no, please specify the reasons	
b) yes, some assessments or monitoring undertaken (please specify)	<p><u>Ecosystem Level:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hemeroby of Austrian Forest Ecosystems (Grabherr et al. 1998)</li> <li>• Integrated Monitoring: Zöbelboden</li> <li>• Monitoring of the Alpine Zone</li> <li>• Red List of threatened biotope types (Federal Environment Agency 2002)</li> <li>• Monitoring of glaciers</li> </ul> <p><u>Species Level:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Austrian Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF): listing of 35 scientific collections, which deal with organism from the alpine region (algae, mosses, higher plants, amphibians, arthropoda, mollusca, etc.)</li> <li>• Red List of threatened animals (Gepp et al. 1994)</li> <li>• Red List of threatened plants (Nicklfeld et al. 1999)</li> <li>• Various ongoing projects on mapping of biotopes (fauna and flora), e.g.: Conservation programme for bats (<a href="http://www.fledermausschutz.at">www.fledermausschutz.at</a>), monitoring of the bearded vulture (National park Hohe Tauern);</li> <li>• In addition to that an international Symposium on "Mapping of biotopes in mountainous regions" was held (2000, Salzburg/Austria; report is available)</li> </ul> <p><u>Genetic Diversity Level:</u></p> <p>Genetic Monitoring of Forest Ecosystems (ongoing project)</p> <p>In situ conservation: Establishment of a network of forest gene conservation reserves</p> <p>Ex situ conservation: forest gene banks</p> <p>Monitoring is also carried out in varying degrees in Natura 2000 sites</p>
c) yes, comprehensive assessments or monitoring programmes undertaken (please specify where results can be found, and opportunities and obstacles, if any)	

### Regulatory and Information System and Action Plan

<p><b>8. Has your country developed regulations, policies and programs for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?</b></p>	
a) no	
b) yes, please specify sectors	<p><u>Agriculture / Forestry:</u> e.g. within the Regulation on Rural Development various measures are aiming at enhancing and maintaining biodiversity in mountainous areas</p> <p><u>Forestry:</u> e.g. programme to protect rare tree species, enhancement of dead wood, enhancement of mixed stands, etc..</p>

	<p>The revised Forest Act (1 June 2002) generates improvements for mountain forests. The new act reinforces the principle of sustainability, i.e. a forest management that is well adapted to the economic, ecological and social demands made upon it, and incorporates a reorientation of the protective forest concept (20% of Austrian forests are protective forests!).</p> <p><u>Nature Conservation</u>: establishment of protected areas (e.g. National Parks); also in context with implementation of the EU Natura 2000 Network of Protected Areas</p> <p><u>Spatial Planning</u> <u>Environmental Impact Assessment</u></p> <p>Austrian Strategy on Biological Diversity</p> <p>Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development</p>
<p><b>9. Has your country applied the ecosystem approach (adopted at COP 5) in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?</b></p>	
a) no	
b) yes, please provide some cases or examples	Case Study: The Ecosystem Approach and Forests in Austria (not published yet)
<p><b>10. Does your national biodiversity strategy and action plan cover mountain biological diversity?</b></p>	
a) no, please specify why	
b) yes, please give some information on the strategy and plan, in particular on mountain biodiversity	The National Strategy on Biodiversity explicitly addresses mountain ecosystems/biodiversity: e.g. by goals in the agricultural sector stipulating the re-establishment of populations of threatened farm animals from alpine regions, the conservation of plant communities from alpine pastures and grasslands, etc.
<p><b>11. Has your country disseminated the relevant information concerning management practices, plans and programmes for conservation and sustainable use of components of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?</b></p>	
a) no	
b) yes, please provide details where information can be retrieved concerning management practices, plans and programmes	<p>e.g. <u>Via internet:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information on the Programme "Rural Development": <a href="http://www.lebensministerium.at">www.lebensministerium.at</a></li> <li>- National Biodiversity Strategy and other information: <a href="http://www.biodiv.at">www.biodiv.at</a></li> <li>- Criteria and indicators for sustainable hunting (internet-platform: <a href="http://www.biodiv.at/chm/jagd">www.biodiv.at/chm/jagd</a>)</li> <li>- Forest Authorities provide specific advice on measures aiming at enhancing biodiversity in forests</li> </ul>

## Cooperation

<p><b>12. Has your country undertaken any collaboration with other Parties for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems at the regional level or within a range of mountains?</b></p>	
<p>a) no</p>	
<p>b) yes, please specify the objectives of this collaboration and achievements</p>	<p><b>Alpine Convention:</b>  One essential cornerstone in efforts to protect fragile mountainous ecosystems was achieved with the "Convention on the Protection of the Alps (Alpine Convention)", a legally binding framework convention and especially by its Implementing Protocols. The Alpine Convention provides an institutional structure for co-operation among the Alpine States, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland, and the European Community (EC) and defines goals to be achieved through this co-operation, as for instance soil conservation, or mountain agriculture, or mountain forests. The main objective of the Alpine Convention is the protection and preservation of the Alps taking into account the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle and the principle of co-operation and giving due regard to the interests of all Parties to the Convention and their Alpine regions as well as using the available resources prudently and in a sustainable manner.</p> <p><b>CIPRA</b> – Commission Internationale pour la Protection des Alpes : Improvement of flow of information within alpine countries</p> <p><b>ARGE Alpen – Adria:</b> Regional Cooperation among Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia</p> <p><b>Development Cooperation:</b>  Austrian development cooperation has as its priorities the alleviation of poverty, preservation of peace and protection of the environment. Many of its programmes support mountain region development, as a number of the countries in which Austrian development cooperation is concentrated are countries with a large proportion of mountains.  <u>Example:</u> In <u>Bhutan</u> (target country of Austrian Development Cooperation) an Integrated Forest Management Project in Ura showed that the economic use of fir woods in high mountain areas is not useful. Therefore a new project (Forest Ecology in High Mountains) was established. In Bhutan also a project to support sustainable tourism in mountains was undertaken, e.g. training of trekking-guides, the establishment of the Bhutanese tourism master plan, the</p>

organisation of a National Tourism Workshop, the Feasibility Study for a Hotel Management and Tourism Training Institute. In addition to that Austria also set a contribution to the restoration of the endangered Trongsa Dzong in Bhutan and supports a study on reducing the danger for eruption of glacier lakes.

**International partnership for sustainable development of mountain regions:**

Austria supported all the efforts made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002 to press for the implementation of Chapter 13 of Agenda 21. Austria is ready to join an international partnership for sustainable development of mountain regions and will concentrate on two priorities:

- Regional co-operations
- Knowledge transfer

**International Masters of Science Curriculum in Mountain Forestry:**

This postgraduate course has recently been started by the University of Agricultural Sciences in Vienna and provides specialist knowledge on the ecological, technical and socio-economic aspects of mountain forestry to English-speaking students from around the world. The course is aimed mainly at students from developing countries and is based strongly on the needs and requirements of countries with difficult social and economic circumstances in terms of its methodology and content.  
<http://mountainforestry.boku.ac.at/>

**Network of Excellence in Sustainable Development of Mountain Forests:**

The University of Agricultural Sciences in Vienna is working on the creation of a Network of Excellence in Sustainable Development of Mountain Forests to achieve greater integration of the fragmented know-how and research infrastructure on this subject. The plan involves linking over 30 European and non-European research centres and all the main international organisations. The network will make better use of existing resources, handle important mountain forestry matters and help to develop human resources and knowledge transfer and dissemination.

**Mountain region dialogue:**

Since 1996, 100 graduates from many different faculties and universities have completed the 'Integrated regional development in developing countries' course at Vienna Technical University. Partnerships have been developed with the Universidad del Santa Chibote in Peru and the University of Peshawar in Pakistan, and students from these universities participate in study projects along with Austrian student groups. The objective is conscious recognition and networking

	of the potentials within a region. Under the auspices of the Year of Mountains, a platform has been set up to link the universities in Austria and Peru, NGO's, interest groups, farming communities, Austrian and Peruvian students, experts and members of the administration in a joint dialogue. <a href="http://www.falch.at">http://www.falch.at</a>
<b>13. Has your country signed or ratified any regional or international treaty concerning mountains?</b>	
a) no	
b) yes, please specify which treaty and provide as much as possible a report on the progress in the implementation of the treaties, including any major constraints in the implementation of the treaties	<p><b>Alpine Convention</b></p> <p>The Alpine Convention was signed in 1991 in Salzburg by most of the above-mentioned States and the EC. It entered into force in 1995. To reach the aims determined in the Convention, the Alpine States elaborate and conclude Implementing Protocols. Since 1991 the Parties managed to negotiate and finalize the following eight Protocols: 1) Regional Planning and Sustainable Development, 2) Mountain Agriculture, 3) Nature Protection and Maintenance of Landscapes, 4) Mountain Forests, 5) Tourism, 6) Soil Protection, 7) Energy and 8) Transport. In 2000 also a Protocol on Dispute Settlement was signed which is not an Implementing Protocol in the strict sense but aims at closing a gap that existed in the Alpine Convention. In 2002, the parliament of Liechtenstein was the first to authorise ratification of all 9 Protocols so far concluded. Austria and Germany followed, so that the first eight Implementing Protocols and the Protocol on Dispute Settlement are going to enter into force on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002.</p> <p><b>Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe:</b></p> <p>In terms of its international policy, Austria has always been actively engaged in mountain matters. Austria is a signatory to the Mountain Forest Resolution S4 (Adapting the Management of Mountain Forests to New Environment Conditions) of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.</p>

**Relevant thematic areas and crosscutting issues**

<b>14. Has your country taken account of mountain ecosystems while implementing thematic programmes of work on agricultural; inland waters; forest; and dry and sub-humid lands biological diversity?</b>	
a) no	
b) yes - but in only one or two thematic programmes of work	x
c) yes, included in all programmes of	

work	
d) if yes, please specify details	Implementation of the relevant CBD-thematic work programmes is in process; Mountain Ecosystems are specifically taken into account in the context of – as an examples - the Natural Forest Reserves Programme, within the implementation of Natura 2000 (establishment of Network of protected areas according to EU-Regulations)
<b>15. Has your country taken any measures to ensure that the tourism in mountains is sustainable?</b>	
a) no, please specify why	
b) yes, but in early stages of development (please specify the reasons)	
c) in advanced stages of development (please specify the reasons)	
d) relatively comprehensive measures being implemented (please specify the reasons)	Major tourist developments are subject to a number of assessments before planning permission is granted; In the context of the "International Year of Ecotourism 2002" a European preparatory conference on ecotourism in mountain areas has been organised by Austria. Handbooks were published, e.g. a manual for Austrian communities – modules to improve the motivation and the implementation of ecotouristic projects; handbook "Tourism with future"
<b>16. Has your country taken any measures to protect the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?</b>	
a) no	
b) not relevant	
c) yes, but in early stages of policy or programme development	
d) yes, in advanced stages of development	
e) some programmes being implemented	x e.g. various ongoing programmes on nature protection based on private contracts are aiming at the protection of traditional knowledge, e.g. conservation of meadow-orchards, larch-pasture-forests, etc.)
f) comprehensive programmes being implemented	
<b>17. Has your country developed any programmes for the protection of natural and cultural heritages in the mountains?</b>	
a) no	
b) yes, please provide some information in the programmes	Establishment of a number of protected mountainous landscapes: e.g. National Parks

	(such as NP Hohe Tauern, NP Kalkalpen, NP Gesäuse), Natura 2000 sites, Natural Forest Reserve Programme; Also under the auspices of the Alpine Convention a Network of Protected Areas within the Alpine bow was established.
<b>18. Has your country established protected areas in mountains?</b>	
a) no	
b) yes, please specify the percentage of mountains under protected areas out of total mountain areas in your country	x (total percentage not available)
<b>19. Has your country undertaken any activities to celebrate the International Year of Mountains and Eco-tourism?</b>	
a) no	
b) yes, please specify	<p>Austria sees the International Year of Mountains as an opportunity to raise the profile of projects and initiatives to improve the protection and sustainable management of mountain areas nationally and internationally and to promote international co-operation.</p> <p>In January 2002 the Austrian government approved a raft of measures on the Year of Mountains and officially opened the Year of Mountains in Austria at a ceremony at the Chancellor's office on 21 March. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management is acting as the information hub between the national and international players. A working party set up by the Austrian Council for Sustainable Development unites various institutions and groups to promote awareness, exchange information and coordinate programmes. The Austrian website <a href="http://www.berge2002.at">www.berge2002.at</a> provides constantly updated information on matters of interest, activities and contact addresses. The Year of Mountains has stimulated a large number of initiatives and over 70 events and projects are being arranged by various organisations and institutions throughout Austria.</p> <p>Further information is available on the Austrian homepage "Year of Mountains": <a href="http://www.berge2002.at">www.berge2002.at</a></p>

### **Case-studies**

**Please provide case-studies made by your country in conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems.**

- Case study "The Ecosystem Approach and Forest Ecosystems in Austria" (not published yet);
- OECD Case Study "Biodiversity, Landscapes and Ecosystem Services of Agriculture and Forestry in the Austrian Alpine Region – An Approach to Economic Evaluation";

- Vogl-Lukasser, B. & C.R. Vogl (2002): Study "Ethnobotany as an Interdisciplinary Tool for the Study of the Biocultural Management of Agrobiodiversity in Homegardens of Alpine Farmers in Eastern Tyrol, Austria"; In: Interdisciplinary Mountain Research; Roberta Bottarin & Ulrike Tappeiner (eds.), p 264-273. Blackwell Science, London.

### ***Further comments***

ad 1)

Mountain Ecosystems are the most wide-ranging landscapes in Austria: the Alps take up 60% of the total surface area. This underlines the importance of mountain ecosystems for the Austrian biological diversity, also in terms of agriculture, forestry, tourism etc.