

# Report about site visit in the pilot area Kalkalpen National Park / Gesäuse National Park



## REPORT ABOUT THE SITE VISIT IN THE KALKALPEN NATIONAL PARK (AUSTRIA) ON 21-22 OCTOBER 2013

### Organisation / (legal) structure / management of the park

- The park was established by a provincial law in 1997.
- European protected area - IUCN Category II, a NATURA 2000 Site, a Ramsar site and a wilderness area - IUCN Category I.
- Managed by a limited liability company, 50% owned by the republic of Austria and 50% by the Province of Upper Austria (NPK).
- The land is owned mainly by the Austrian state forests (about 88%), 1% owned by municipalities, 11% owned by privates.

### Funding

- Basic funding for daily activities is provided by the State and by the Province of Upper Austria (NPK).
- Additional park's activities are funded by European projects (i.e. ECONNECT, greenAlps) or by private foundations, private donors and souvenir shops.

### Stakeholder

- Active in the involvement of the stakeholders for the management of ecosystem services – mainly representatives of the province Upper Austria, Styria and Lower Austria, Republic of Austria, local mayors; representatives of NGOs, tourism, forestry, hunting, agriculture, regional development and economy.
- High stakeholder involvement in European projects.

### Regional development and awareness raising

- Important player for regional development.
- High acceptance within the provinces and on national level.
- Active in the promotion and awareness raising activities through on going public relation; projects related to regional development; publication of research results.

- NP magazine, research papers, co-operation with regional tourism, co-operation with local business partners (e.g. hiking hotels, guesthouses, agricultural producers, outdoor activity providers).

### **Provided / needed ecosystem services (ESS) in the region**

- Forests provision
- Carbon sequestration
- General wilderness increasing (intrinsic value)
- Air quality regulation
- Ecological Habitat Quality: 350.000 visitors per year in the area of the NP Kalkalpen

### **Needs of / within the pilot area**

- Increase the co-operation between local authorities, civic organizations, local business, local government and pilot area administration to harmonize conservation actions at local level and develop sound policies.
- Develop resilient system planning for climate change adaptations and integrate pilot area planning and development in the management of surrounding landscape using an ecosystem approach.
- Creation of “green belts” with restricted access and specific rules for private land and quiet zones for wildlife to enhance ecological connectivity among different provinces (the project “Netzwerk Naturwald” is a first attempt).
- Develop of agreed protocols to solve conflicts between human and wildlife.
- Identification of gaps in protected areas (including opportunities and needs for connectivity).
- Application of de-fragmentation programs / plans / process (for areas affected by intensive human activities, e.g. forestry).
- Increase tourist offers (i.e. increasing transnational co-operation) to attract tourists for a longer stay.
- Increase the involvement of local communities in the development of a participatory process for the assessment of ESS economic, social, cultural and spiritual benefits.
- Creation of partnerships for ESS conservation and valorization.
- Balance the long-term benefits of pilot areas with the immediate needs of local communities and vice versa.
- Increase local people’s acceptance of the NP.

- Develop compensation programs about restricted policies for access to natural resources.
- Provide a clear picture of economic benefits of ESS to local communities.
- Develop market-based charges for goods and services.
- Develop a community-based conservation (preservation of place-specific land-use practices developed by local inhabitants over generations).