

## AUSTRIAN FOREST REPORT 2015

For more detailed information, please see the 2015 Forest Report.

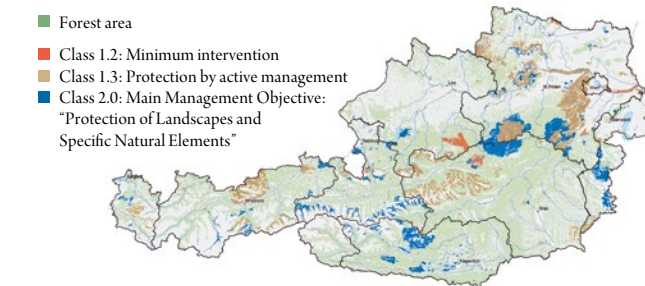


## HIGH SHARE OF PROTECTED FORESTS

### INDICATOR 4.9 – PROTECTED FORESTS

In Austria, about 830,000 hectares of forests are located in areas identified under nature conservation law; this corresponds to 21.5 % of the total forest area.

### Austrian forests in protected areas, classified according to Forest Europe 2013



Source: Federal Environment Agency 2014

## THE PROTECTIVE EFFECT OF FORESTS SAFEGUARDS HUMAN HABITATS

### INDICATORS 5.1 & 5.2 – PROTECTED FORESTS

Almost one fifth of the Austrian forest area (820,000 hectares) are so-called "protective forests", which means forests having a protective effect. They protect infrastructures like settlements, roads, cables and pipes (forests with object-protecting effect) as well as soil and water (site protecting forest). The Initiative Protection By Forest (in German "Initiative Schutz durch Wald", abbreviated ISDW) has proved to be a suitable planning and subsidisation instrument to preserve and enhance object-protecting forests and will be continued on an area of about 385,000 hectares in the framework of the upcoming Rural Development Programme.

## FORESTS ARE A SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC FACTOR

### INDICATORS 6.2, 6.5 & 6.8 – CONTRIBUTION OF FOREST SECTOR TO GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, FOREST SECTOR WORKFORCE, TRADE IN WOOD

Together with the wood, paper and board industries forestry plays an important role in economy.

In 2012 the forestry sector accounted only for about 1.8 % of the GDP; in absolute terms the gross value added amounted to 5 billion euro.

However, with a foreign trade surplus of 3.69 billion euro the value-added chain of forest-timber-paper is one of the most important items of Austria's foreign trade.

About 300,000 persons draw an income from the forest- and wood-based sector. The significantly increasing mechanisation and technical development of timber harvesting which has taken place since the beginning of the nineteen eighties, as well as administrative rationalisation measures, have led to declining numbers of employees.

## THE USE OF WOOD PROMOTES CLIMATE PROTECTION AND GREEN ECONOMY

### INDICATORS 6.7 & 6.9 – WOOD CONSUMPTION, ENERGY FROM WOOD RESOURCES

Using the renewable raw material wood from sustainable forest management has a positive impact on climate protection and on the green economy and strengthens Austria as a business location. Presently, approximately 38 million cubic metres of wood are processed in Austria per year. This wood is not entirely from Austrian forests; almost 10 million cubic metres are imported. The largest timber consumers are the sawing, paper and board industries. The share of wood used to generate energy has continuously risen over the past few years.

## MODERN TRAINING AND FURTHER TRAINING ENSURES SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

### INDICATOR 6.13 – RESEARCH, TRAINING AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Forestry training is oriented towards the concept of sustainable, multi-functional forest management as well as towards the job opportunities of its graduates in the different fields of production. It takes account of national and international education strategies. Austrian forest expertise is estimated and demanded world-wide.

After declining numbers of students and graduates from the study branches forestry and wood technology were observed for some time, this trend has reversed now and student numbers are rising again.

## SPECIAL FOCUS ON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FORESTS

### INDICATORS 6.11 & 6.17 – CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES, FOREST PEDAGOGICS

With the help of targeted measures the social and cultural aspects of forests can be developed and made noticeable.

More than 1,000 persons have already been trained in special "certificate courses" on forest-related education and on the issue "Forests & Culture". With some 41,000 offers for kindergartens, schools and adults, graduates of those courses reached approximately 620,000 persons during the 2007-2013 period.

Under the title "Green CARE Wald" forest topics of relevance to society are bundled in order to better integrate them into regional and operational procedures. A particular task to be pursued in this field is the development of specific health and therapy offers in and around forests.



## AUSTRIA TAKES BIG EFFORTS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

### INDICATORS 7.1, 7.2 & 7.3 – AUSTRIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL AND MULTILATERAL FOREST GOVERNANCE

The objective of Austria's foreign-policy endeavours is to promote the breakthrough of sustainable forest management principles, if possible all over the world. Austria proactively participates in the process of shaping international forest policy, in particular at the United Nations Forum on Forests, in the Climate Convention, in the Convention on Biodiversity and in the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe). A second priority is bilateral know-how and technology transfer as well as support for projects on sustainable forest management. In 2013 alone, 12 forest-related projects were publicly funded in the scope of development cooperation (€ 7.6 million) and received technical assistance from Austrian organisations. Furthermore, international organisations active in fields of relevance to forests received about € 240,000 of financial support.



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## AUSTRIA'S FORESTS 2015

### INFORMATION BASED ON THE AUSTRIAN CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

These criteria and indicators were developed for Austria on the basis of the Pan-European Criteria and Indicators<sup>1</sup> to illustrate to what extent the objective of sustainable forest management is being achieved. The criteria describe the different aspects of sustainability. With the help of the indicators the changes over time can be measured and assessed for each criterion. Indicators show how well the requirements specified by the criteria are met and thus serve as the basis of the reporting system.

#### Criteria:

1. Contribution of Austrian forests to climate protection
2. Health and vitality of Austrian forests
3. Productivity and economic aspects of Austrian forests
4. Biodiversity in Austria's forests
5. Protective functions of Austria's forests
6. Social and economic aspects of Austrian forests
7. Austria's international responsibility for sustainable forest management

1) The Pan-European Criteria and Indicators were developed in the framework of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. For more detailed information, see [www.forest-europe.org](http://www.forest-europe.org).

## A COUNTRY RICH IN FORESTS

### INDICATOR 1.1 – FOREST AREA

In Austria, forest land has increased for decades. It covers about 4 million hectares, a figure which corresponds to 47.6 % of the whole Austrian territory and exceeds the EU average of 42 %.

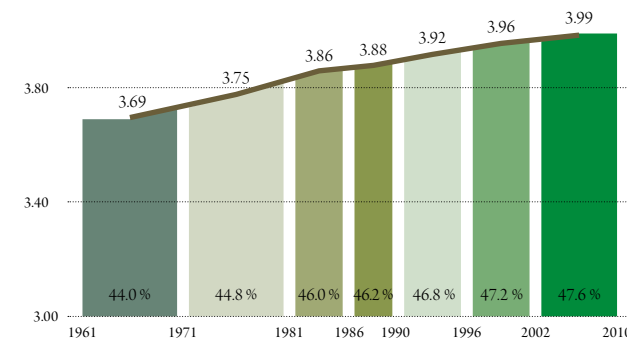
#### Map of Austrian forests



Source: BFW 2014

### Development of the forest area in Austria

in million hectares/share in total area in percent



Source: ÖWI 2007/09, BFW 2014

## LARGE STOCKS OF WOOD

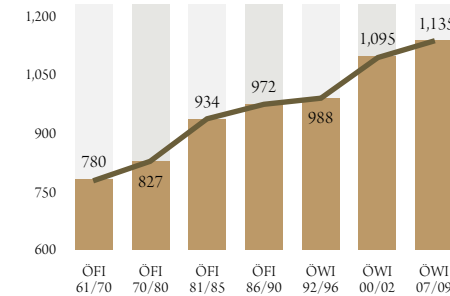
### INDICATOR 1.2 – STOCK OF WOOD

With 1,135 million m<sup>3</sup>, the stocks in wood have reached a record level. With an average 354 m<sup>3</sup>/hectare, small private forests have the largest stock of all ownership types.

The increase in stocks is not only a consequence of the growth in area, but is also due to a significant increase in forests themselves.

#### Development of stocks

Development of stocks (in million m<sup>3</sup>) since 1961



Source: ÖWI 2007/09, BFW 2014

## FORESTS ARE OUR MOST IMPORTANT CARBON SINK

### INDICATOR 1.4 – CARBON STOCKS

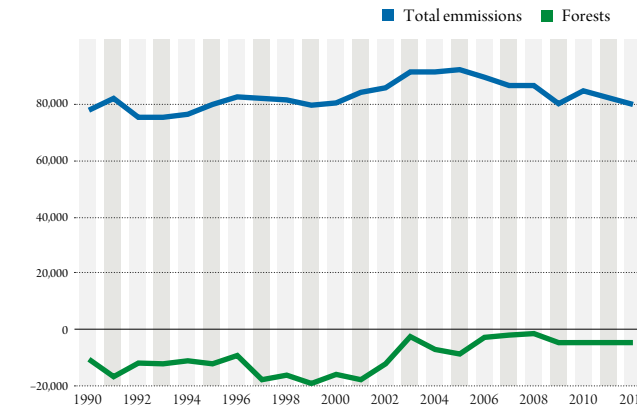
Surveys prove that forests absorb by far more carbon than they release. In earlier reporting years on the Climate Convention (1990 to 2012) forests have always acted as carbon sinks. These sinks correspond to up to 25 % of Austria's annual greenhouse gas emissions.

The carbon balance of forests is the by far most important factor of influence on the greenhouse balance of the entire land-use sector.

As a result of the higher degree of utilisation the net sink of forests has,

## Overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and CO<sub>2</sub> sink through forests

in Gg (gigagramme) CO<sub>2</sub>



Source: Federal Environment Agency 2014

over the past few years, clearly decreased compared to the figures of the nineteen nineties. However, the wood which is utilised has a positive effect on the greenhouse gas balance also in the balance of the timber product stock from domestic felling (sawnwood, panels, paper) and, indirectly, via the substitution of products made of other raw materials (e.g. concrete, steel, plastic).

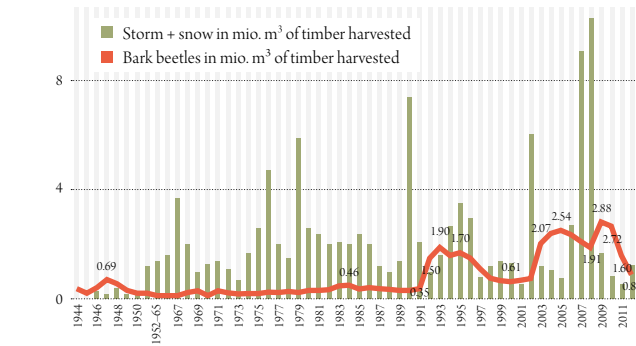
## FOREST DAMAGE IS A CONTINUOUS CHALLENGE

### INDICATOR 2.4 – FOREST DAMAGE

Damage caused by storm and bark beetles are among the most significant problems of the past decades. A connection of this development with climate change is rather likely. Furthermore, there are harmful factors that endanger the stocks of individual tree species all over Austria, for example the ash dieback caused by the Chalara fraxinea fungus. Damage by game has been on a high level for many years and often prevents the necessary regeneration.

## Trend in quantities damaged by bark beetles, storm and snow

in million cubic metres (m<sup>3</sup>)



Source: BFW, Documentation of the forest damage factors 2014

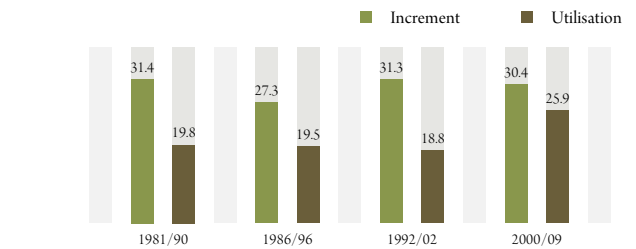
## WOOD INCREMENT EXCEEDS CONSUMPTION

### INDICATOR 3.1 – INCREMENT AND FELLINGS

Since the first surveys of the nineteen sixties the quantity of wood we consumed has always been below the increment. Presently the annual increment amounts to approximately 30.4 million cubic metres, of which 25.9 million cubic metres are utilised.

### Total increment and total utilisation

in million cubic metres (m<sup>3</sup>)



Source: ÖWI 2007/09, BFW 2014

## DIVERSITY OF TREE SPECIES COMPOSITION

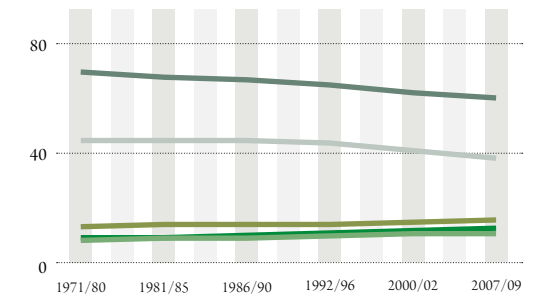
### INDICATOR 4.1 – TREE SPECIES COMPOSITION

For decades the trend in Austria's forest management has been towards greater closeness to nature. As a result, the share of broadleaved trees and shrubs has increased, pure spruce stands have decreased and a trend towards mixed stands has been observed.

### Shares of forest land by types of mix in commercial forest

in percent

- Pure coniferous stands
- Pure spruce stands
- Mixed coniferous and deciduous stands
- Pure deciduous stands
- Mixed deciduous and coniferous stands



Source: ÖWI 2007/09, BFW 2014

## GROWING SHARE OF DEADWOOD

### INDICATOR 4.5 – DEADWOOD

Dead wood in the form of standing tree stumps and lying trunks provide a habitat for a multitude of organisms and becomes an important component of the forest soil after humidification. Many species depend on deadwood during part of their life cycle. Since the nineteen nineties the share of deadwood has almost doubled and now amounts to about 8.4 m<sup>3</sup>/hectare, which is 2.5 % of the total stock.