



**MOUNTAINS
& LAKES**
WORLD OF

Nassfeld
Pressegger See
nice surprise

LESACHTAL

WEISSENSEE
Spielplatz der Natur



World of Mountains and Lakes Nassfeld-Lesachtal-Weissensee

Dossier for the certification GSTC-D

NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH

Interreg
Italia-Österreich
365 days - World of Mountains
European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION

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The project WoM365 -365 Days - World of Mountains (2019-2021) is funded by the Interreg Italia-Austria V (2014-2020).

WoM365 -365 Days - World of Mountains

The goal of the project is to develop the two neighbouring border regions Nassfeld/Pramollo and Tarvisio/Valcanale into an all year cross-border tourist destination while protecting the common natural and cultural heritage and enabling its sustainable economic use. The project contributes to the cross-border interconnection of tourist activities happening within the scope of a resource conserving, eco-friendly and sustainable tourism, focused especially on the fields of nature, culture and culinary arts tourism well as in the field of experience and adventure oriented nature activities. Cross-border packages of tourism offers and services being based on the natural and cultural heritage of the region are to be developed. To ensure an efficient use of the offers and services a mobility concept, focused on a connected, sustainable and eco-friendly mobility, is to be prepared. Cross-border marketing activities will be designed and implemented promoting all year tourism and increasing the degree of the border region's publicity and thus, rising the tourism value added. With the implementation of a cross-border IT network, including a visitor card, a booking portal and online-communication, prepared in cooperation with accommodation providers, tourist attractions and mobility offers, the visitors are to be provided with a simplified and up to date access to tourist offers and services.

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Forward



2020 will be remembered in history for the year of the pandemic, a calamity that is changing habits, lifestyles and socio-economic balances across all countries on all continents. Inevitably all this has reflected negatively on the tourist economy, so much so that we can now refer to a way of understanding and practicing tourism BEFORE 2020, and to a different one, hopefully new way AFTER 2020.

The clear target of the tourism destination Nassfeld - Pressegger See / Lesachtal / Weissensee is to guarantee a sustainable life for the local population as well as tourism growth. This is the only possibility to preserve the natural and living space for future generations. In order for a tourism region to act sustainably, a strategic instrument (tourism monitoring) is necessary. It shows the need for action and supports tourism development. The goal of the destination is to implement the various topics of sustainability in tourism development step by step and to grow qualitatively.

The path already taken and the vision for sustainable living space and tourism development have also been honoured. The Austrian Federal Ministry for the Environment awarded our region one of the two most sustainable regions in Austria. Our vision is to continue this positive development with a catalogue of measures.

After a phase of research into best approaches to recognize the sustainability of this territory, the destination decided to pursue the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), an international, third-party certification of environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

The GSTC certification is an essential building block of this project, as the criteria and the newly created network will further develop the destination. Joint certification with our partners in Italy is also an essential component of future cross-border cooperation.

Markus Brandstätter, Head of NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH

1. Introduction

The Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee (NLW) in Carinthia is a prominent tourism destination that for several years has been moving steadily to improve its impacts on sustainability. Comprised of ten municipalities and a total population of 21.214, every year the NLW generates around 2.2 million overnight stays and over 440.000 arrivals. The regional cooperation exists since 1999, in the beginning the name was "Karnische Tourismus GmbH". The name of NLW was given in 2014. Over the years, the destination has been able to develop and regenerate its tourism products, by meeting market demand and by increasingly involving the community in its decision-making processes. The three areas comprised in the NLW destination have developed their own claim and tourism concept, but they are characterised by a commonly shared integrated sustainable approach, based on some key initiatives and strategies supporting sustainable forms of tourism in the destination. These include:

- Slow Food Travel Alpe Adria Carinthia region (including Nassfeld-Pressegger See and Lesachtal)
- Healing landscape of Lesachtal, Mountaineering Villages network
- Weissensee Nature Park, Alpine Pearls network
- Sports and nature-oriented tourism
- Sustainable tourism and gentle mobility, certification of municipalities as 5e-communities

NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH is the marketing company of the tourist destination with the aim of planning the strategic lines of tourist development of the territory related to information, hospitality and tourism promotion. NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH manages the tourism marketing for the ten community members located in the southwest of Carinthia (Hermagor-Pressegger See, Weissensee, Lesachtal, Kötschach-Mauthen, Kirchbach, Dellach, Gitschtal Valley, St. Stefan, Feistritz and Stockenboi) and for the Karnische Incoming GmbH. Karnische Incoming GmbH (KIG) represents 180 local operators from the areas of accommodation, infrastructure providers and leisure economy, as well as the cable car partners from Nassfeld. This shareholder structure ensures that both the public and the private sector work together and in synergy to develop and identify the strategic orientation and planning of the destination.

After years of planning, design, implementation and monitoring of tourism activities, NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH, in 2019, the destination participated in the Climate and Energy Model process (KEM) and in 2020, applied to the KEM Implementation phase as part of a public-private partnership composed of 29 institutions and companies to the second phase of the bid to KEM, to become to the Most Sustainable Tourism Region in Austria.

This process proved to be a catalyst for mobilising new resources, in terms of new partnerships, leadership and concrete action ideas towards becoming the Most Sustainable Region in Austria. Through a participatory approach, the destination developed ten key measures on which efforts will be carried forward over in the 2021-2023 period.

In addition to this process, the "World of Mountains-365 days" Italy-Austria Interreg project with the Tarvisiano Tourism Consortium has also provided additional opportunities to explore cross-boundary exchange of best practices in sustainability and increase the development and marketing of joint tourism products. The objective is to evaluate what has already been done and pave the way for a new form of sustainable tourism development, consistent with market demands for quality tourism, while respectful of the lifestyle of the local communities (see Figure 1).

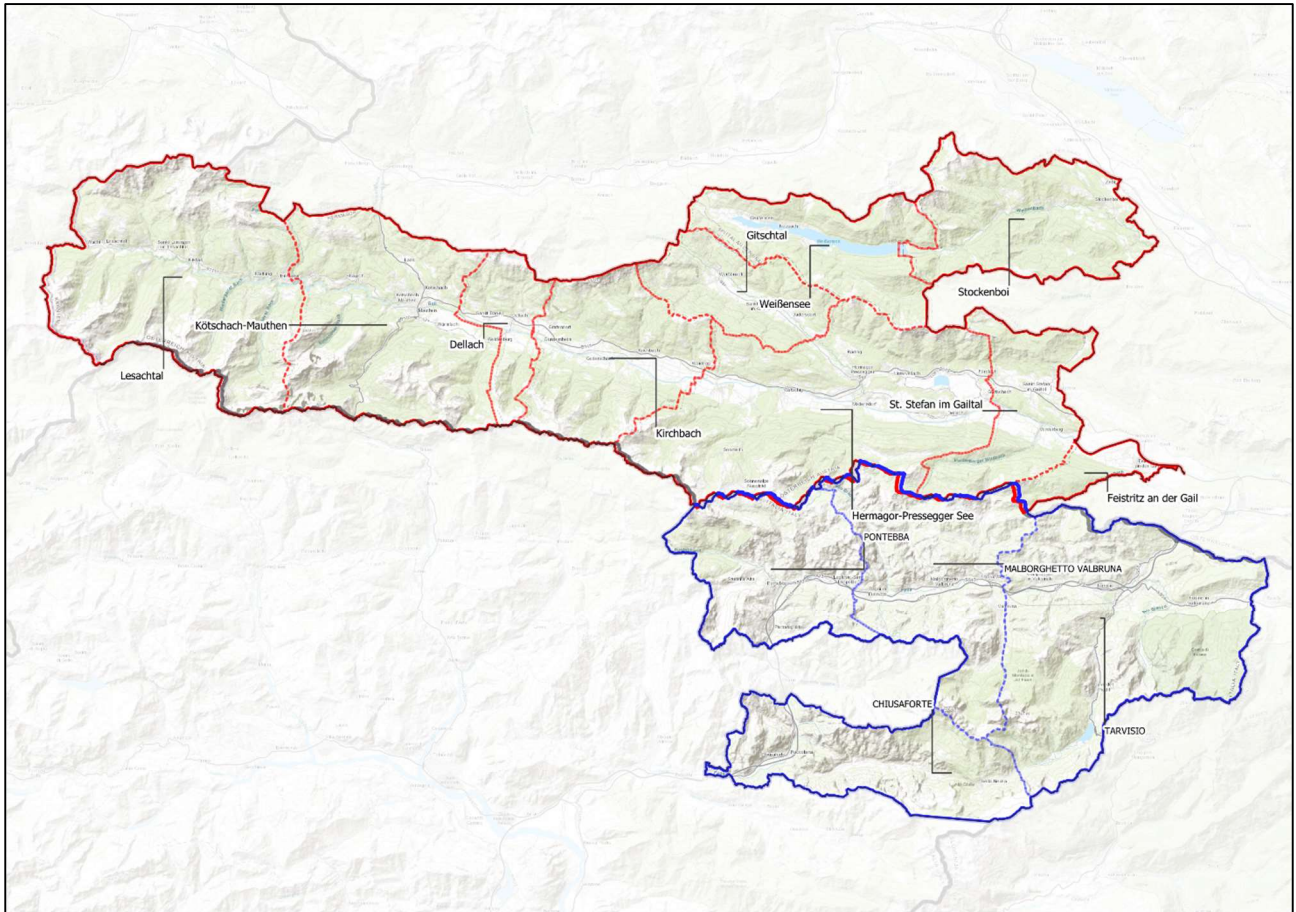


Figure 1. Map of the WoM destination (NLW and Tarvisiano)

It is from these efforts that both destinations have agreed to develop a strategy for a sustainable transnational destination and to be certified as GSTC sustainable tourism destinations.

Box 1. What is the GSTC?

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria were created to provide a common understanding of sustainable tourism. The GSTC Destinations Criteria – known informally also as “GSTC-D” – are the minimum that any tourism destination should aspire to reach. They are organized around four main themes: sustainable management; socio-economic impacts; cultural impacts; and environmental impacts. They have applicability to the entire tourism sector.

The GSTC Criteria have been developed and revised while striving to adhere to the Standard-Setting Code of the ISEAL Alliance, the body recognized to provide guidance on international norms for developing sustainability standards in all sectors.

Source: GSTC Destination Criteria v.2

The analysis of the destination according to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council scheme required the involvement of public and private entities in the area, an analysis of the tourism concept of the destination and the systematization of the data. For this reason, the NLW launched an in-depth analysis of the destination summarized in this strategic document, in collaboration with the University of Carinthia and researchers from Etifor, Spinoff of the University of Padova in Italy.

Box 2. Why the GSTC?

The GSTC criteria were developed in 2013 and revised in 2019 as part of a comprehensive international review process which ensures the criteria apply to any destination worldwide.

The GSTC Criteria are specifically designed for the tourism world and accompany the criteria for hotels/accommodations and tour operators.

The GSTC Criteria are not simply focused on environmental aspects but ensure that attention is devoted to all aspects of sustainability: management, socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts.

The GSTC calls for a third-party audit to achieve certification, and thus ensure reliability and relevancy.

Preparation for a third-party audit ensures that destinations are well organised and prepared to face the challenges of a changing climate, including increasing complexity, risk and societal changes in demand for tourism destinations and experiences.

1.1. Outline of the report

The report summarizes with short texts, diagrams and tables the main aspects that characterise the NLW destination. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the destination, chapter 3 explores the methodologies used for carrying out the work and chapter 4 analyses the destination under the four sections that support the concept of sustainable destination: tourism organization, economic impacts, impacts cultural and environmental impacts.

The tourism development strategies of a territory can only be applicable in a context of effective collaboration between public and private stakeholders. And in 2020, despite enormous challenges due to the Covid sanitary emergency, the NLW together with KEM Tourismus organized five participatory meetings with about 75 stakeholders to reshape strategic direction and activities for the 2021-2023 with a view to apply to the Climate and Energy Model Climate and energy model region and becoming the Most Sustainable Tourism Region in Austria. In addition, through the World of Mountains project, the NLW organised an additional two participatory workshops to assess the points of strength and weakness in relation to the GSTC criteria and to pave the way for achieving the internationally recognised GSTC certification. It is envisioned that this dual process will crown the destination's visions of becoming the Most Sustainable Region in Austria.

The overall work of the NLW and the territory's stakeholders has had the merit of raising awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the destination, while coordinating interventions considered as priorities for sustainable tourism development. All of this, starting from its residents and from the tradition and values that distinguish and make this territorial area unique, rich in culture, history and nature.

Chapter 2 analyses the tourist concept of the Nassfeld-Lesachtal-Weissensee destination, outlining the geographic, demographic, administrative and social aspects and reviewing the main indicators related to accommodation capacity, infrastructural connections and performance of the destination. It also describes the organizational and operational dimensions of the destination, showing its financing structure, the architecture of the tourist offer and its promotion and marketing actions.

Chapter 3 explains the methods used to prepare the certification dossier with a specific focus on the participatory processes adopted.

Chapter 4 summarizes the results of the consultation work, the systematization of the data and the presentation of results. The final chapter provides some conclusive reflections on the results and impacts that the territories can have on sustainability.

2. The Nassfeld-Lesachtal-Weissensee destination

2.1. Socio-economic context



Zollnersee at the Karnische Milchstraße © Gerald Köstl

2.1.1. Geographical context

Nassfeld-Lesachtal-Weissensee (NLW) is located in the Austrian region of Carinthia and comprises three areas: Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee as part of the destination. Carinthia is the southernmost Austrian province or *Land*. Situated within the Eastern Alps, it is noted for its mountains and lakes. The NLW covers an area of 1,0005.8 km², which represents 10.5% of Carinthia (9,535.97 km²).

Nassfeld is at the northern foot of the Carnic Alps, and borders to the south with Italy. Pressegger-See is located close to the municipality of Hermagor, and to the north into the Gailtal Alps, across Kreuzberg Saddle is Weissensee. The Gail River is 121,9 km long and flows from west to east between the Gailtal Alps in the north and the Carnic Alps in the south. The river reaches the state of Carinthia in Lesachtal and from Kötschach-Mauthen runs down the broader Gail Valley to the borders with Italy and Slovenia. The mountains are part of the Southern Limestone Alps and are mainly composed of limestone and dolomite. Passes include Nassfeld Pass to the south and leading into Pontebba in Italy, Plöckenpass to the East towards Lienz, and Kreuzberg Saddle going into Weissensee. The largest centers are Hermagor-Pressegger See, which is the capital of the district, and Kötschach-Mauthen.

2.2.2. Political and administrative structure

From an administration point of view the destination includes 10 municipalities, located in three different districts all part of the state of Carinthia. The district of Hermagor includes the municipalities of: Dellach, Gitschtal, Hermagor-Pressegger See, Kirchbach, Kötschach-Mauthen, Lesachtal, St. Stefan im Gailtal. The municipality of Weissensee is part of the district Spittal a.d. Drau and the municipalities of Stockenboi and Freistritz an der Gail are part of the district Villach Land.

2.2.3. Social context

The resident population in the municipalities part of the NLW amounts to 21.210 inhabitants as of 1.1.2019, equal to 3.8% of the population of Carinthia (Table 1). The most populous municipality in the area is by far Hermagor-Pressegger See (district capital), with 6,889 residents. The population

density (total area) stands at 22.6 inhabitants per km² and is lower than the provincial average of 58.8. the region is one of the sparsely populated areas in Carinthia.

Table 1. Demographic data by municipality: territory, population in 2011 and 2019, population change and density. Source: Statistik Austria.

Communities	Cadastral area in km ²	Population (census 2011)	Population (Census 2019)	Change 2001 - 2019 (%)	Population density 2019 total area
Dellach	36.5	1,373	1,233	-1.4	33.8
Gitschtal	56.5	1,321	1,246	-0.8	22.1
Hermagor-Pressegger See	204.8	7,232	6,889	-3.4	33.6
Kirchbach	99.0	2,881	2,574	-3.1	26.0
Kötschach-Mauthen	154.1	3,613	3,359	-7.0	21.8
Lesach Valley	190.8	1,560	1,319	-15.4	6.9
St. Stefan/Gail	66.4	1,777	1,604	-9.7	24.2
Weissensee	78.1	788	758	-3.8	9.7
Feistritz/Gail	19.3	661	623	-5.7	32.2
Stockenboi	100.2	1,743	1,605	-7.9	16.0
Total NLW	1.005.8	22.949	21.210	-2.2	22.6
Carinthia	9.536,5	559.404	560.939	15.4	58.8

Between 2002 and 2050, the tourism region recorded a population loss of -4.926 Persons, based on the population forecast (Figure 2).

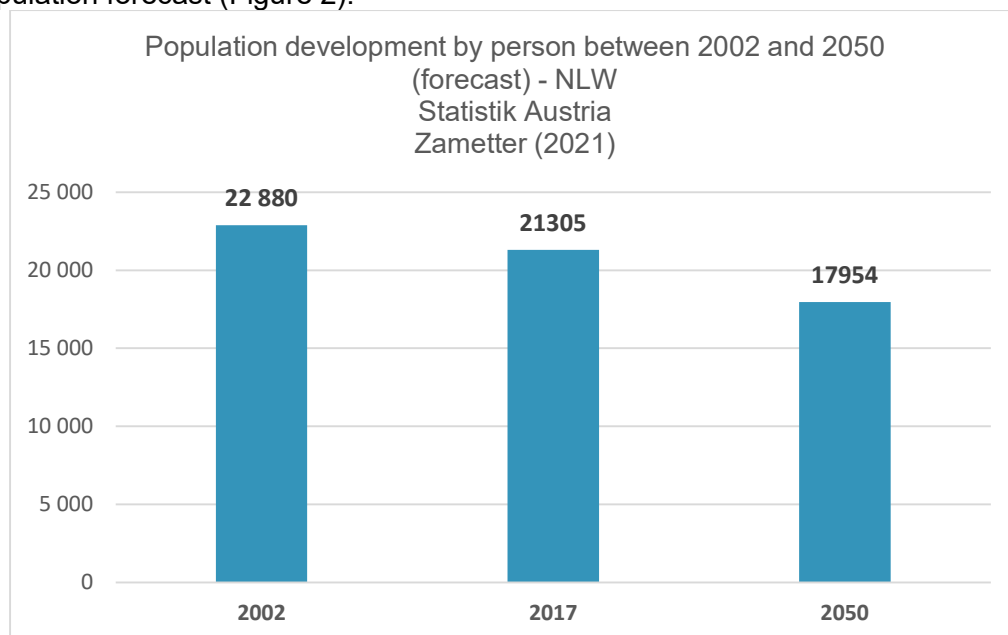


Figure 2. Extract from the demographic dashboard Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. Statistik Austria. Zametter (2021).

In detail, the individual municipalities are severely affected by emigration to different degrees (Table 2). Large enterprises are largely lacking in the region. A strong tourism sector is one of the most important employers in the region. A further development of the tourism sector with regard to green jobs and year-round offers is essential. Tourism is also the main market for other industries in the region (crafts, schools, energy production, construction sector or transport). Only the two largest municipalities, Hermagor and Kötschach-Mauthen, can benefit from intra-regional migration movements caused by the centralized expansion of infrastructure such as doctors, shops, schools,

post offices, banks, restaurants, and tourist leisure infrastructure. For the remote places, especially at high altitudes, severe population losses are forecast.

Table 2. Population development by municipalities 2002-2017 in persons and percentage. Statistik Austria. Extract from the demographic dashboard Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. Zametter (2021).

Population Development by municipalities	2002	2017	Difference in Persons	Difference in Percent
Lesachtal	1.549	1.339	-210	-13,56
Sankt Stefan im Gailtal	1.758	1.587	-171	-9,73
Dellach im Gailtal	1.361	1.240	-121	-8,89
Stockenboi	1.751	1.607	-144	-8,22
Kirchbach	2.863	2.651	-212	-7,40
Feistritz an der Gail	660	615	-45	-6,82
Hermagor-Pressegger See	7.231	6.792	-439	-6,07
Weissensee	794	754	-40	-5,04
Kötschach-Mauthen	3.592	3.438	-154	-4,29
Gitschtal	1.321	1.282	-39	-2,95
Sum	22.880	21.305	-1.575	-6,76

Table 3 and Figure 3 shows the components of the population development between 2017 and 2050 as a forecast. The birth balance is negative, also the migration balance at the municipal level and the national migration balance. The international migration balance is stabilizing. Tourism in particular strengthens population development through international immigration.

Table 3. Population development by municipalities 2017-2050 in persons and percentage; forecast. Statistik Austria. Extract from the demographic dashboard Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. Zametter (2021).

Population Development (forecast) by municipalities	2017	2050	Difference in Persons	Difference in Percent
Lesachtal	1.339	831	-508	-37,95
Dellach	1.240	825	-415	-33,46
Feistritz an der Gail	615	478	-137	-22,25
Gitschtal	1.282	1.028	-254	-19,80
Weissensee	754	625	-129	-17,11
Stockenboi	1.607	1.364	-243	-15,12
Kirchbach	2.651	2.301	-350	-13,20
Hermagor-Pressegger See	6.792	5.978	-814	-11,98
Kötschach-Mauthen	3.438	3.054	-384	-11,18
Sankt Stefan im Gailtal	1.587	1.470	-117	-7,38
Sum	21.305	17.954	-3.351	-15,73

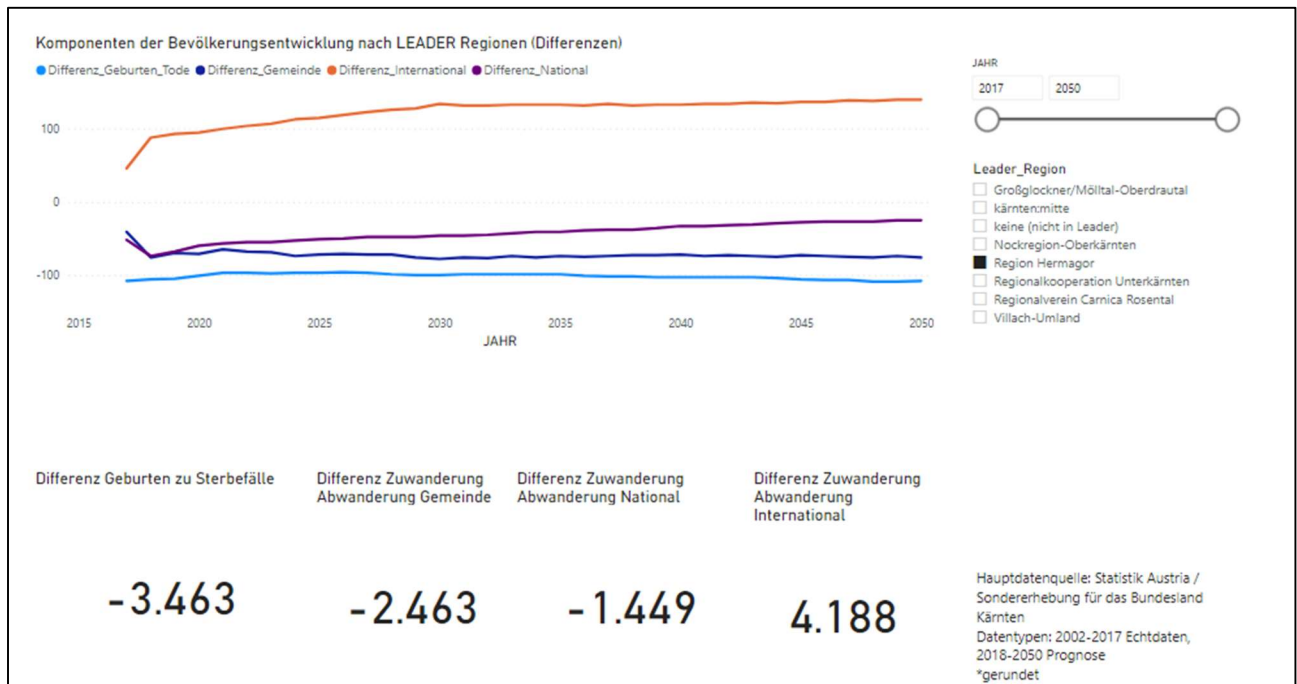


Figure 3. Components of population development 2017-2050, forecast. Statistics Austria. Extract from the population dashboard of the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. Zametter (2021).¹

In addition to population losses, the region is also experiencing strong demographic change in the direction of changes in the population structure. The following structural changes refer to the LEADER-Region Hermagor (EU-development program). This is almost evident with the NLW tourism region (Figure 4).

¹ The EU LEADER-Region Hermagor is similar to the KEM-Region and representative. The local community Stockenboi is not included. A more precise dataset does not exist for this space section.

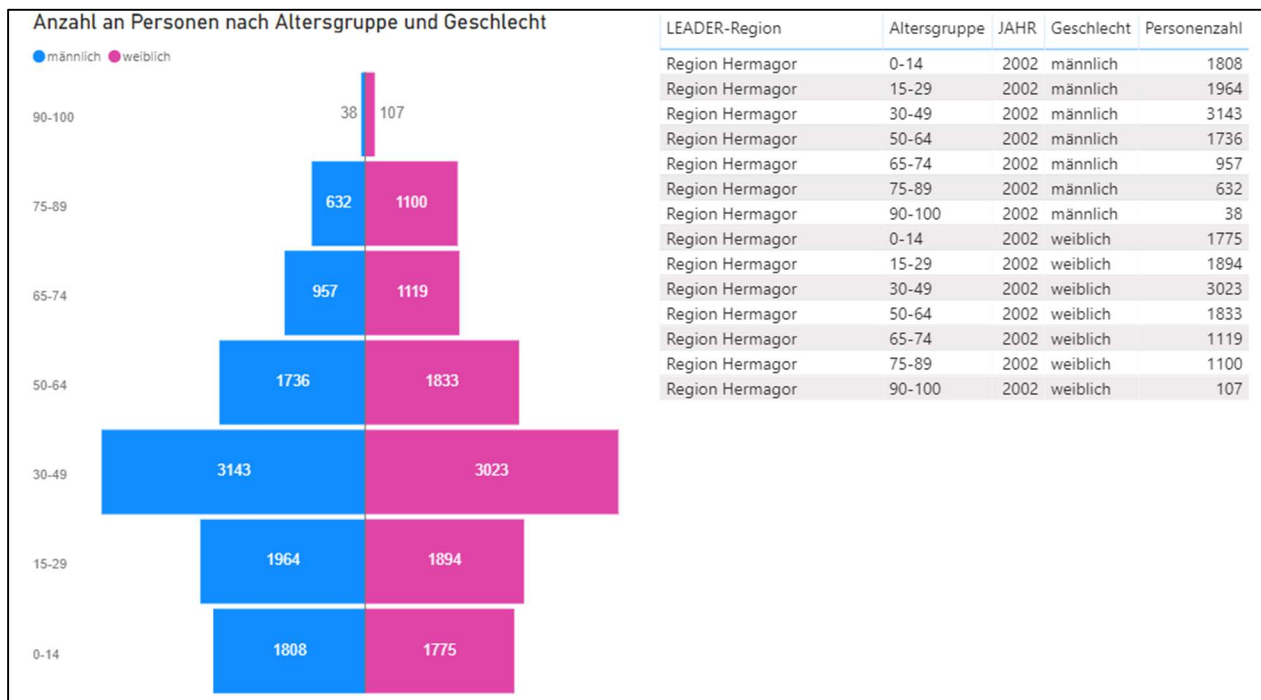


Figure 4. Age and gender structure LEADER-Region Hermagor 2002.² Statistik Austria. Extract from the demographic dashboard Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. Zametter (2021).

The population structure has changed between 2002 and 2020 in the sense that the share of children (0-14 years) has become smaller by -1,206 persons or -33.66 percent (Figure 5). The number of young persons (15-29 years) has decreased by -950 persons or -24.62 percent. The active population (15-64 years) has been reduced by -1,648 persons or -12.12 percent. The number of very old persons (75-100 years) increased by +730 persons or +38.89 percent. The number of very old women increased by 352 persons or +29.16 percent. The intergenerational support rate increases slightly from 0.53 to 0.57 between 2002 and 2020. This means that in the previous period in 2002, statistically 100 persons of age (50-64 years) supported 53 very old persons (75-100 years) in the family environment. This mathematical value increased to 57 highly aged persons per 100 (50-64 years old) by 2020. The number of young women (15-49 years old) decreased by -1,368 persons or -27.82 percent between 2002 and 2020. The number of young men in the same age group decreases by -1,287 persons or -25.20 percent.

² The EU LEADER-Region Hermagor is similar to the KEM-Region and representative. The local community Stockenboi is not included. A more precise dataset does not exist for this space section.

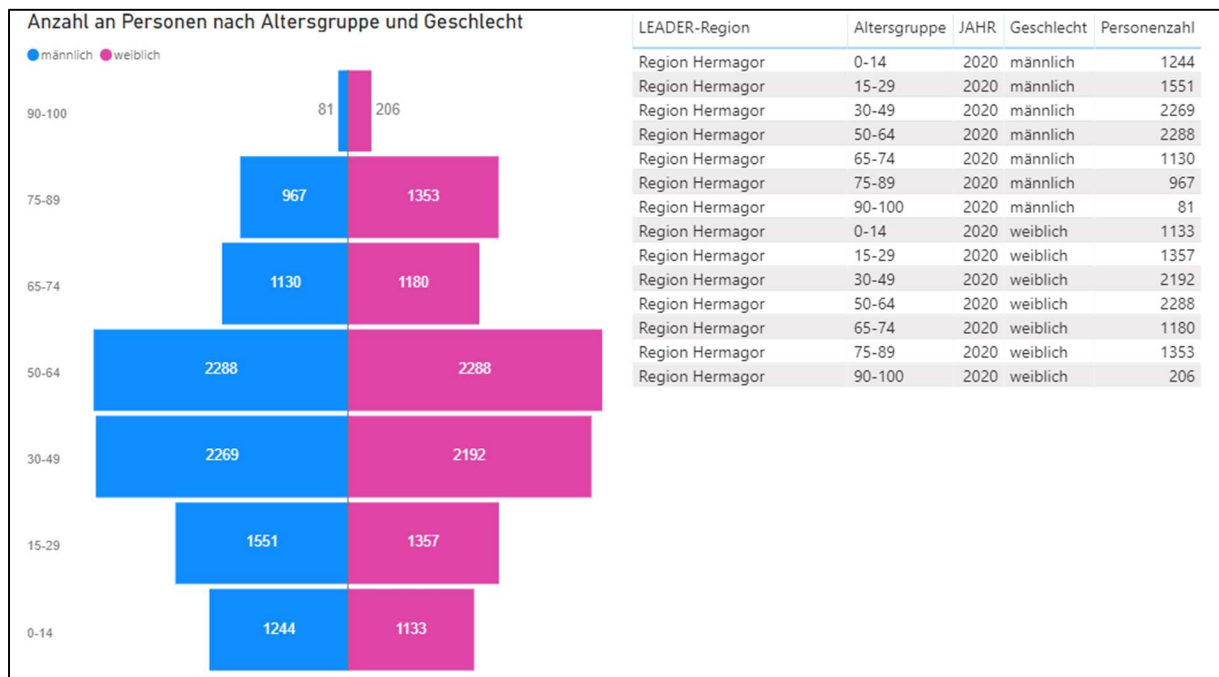


Figure 5. Age and gender structure LEADER-Region Hermagor 2020. Statistik Austria. Extract from the demographic dashboard Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. Zametter (2021).³

The forecasts between 2020 and 2050 show a further continuation and aggravation of the negative trends (Figure 6). The percentage of children (0-14 years) in the LEADER region will further decrease by -457 persons or -19.23 percent. This will pose further major challenges for schools and childcare facilities. The percentage of young people (15-29 years old) will decrease by -726 people or -24.97 percent. The labor force (15-64 years) will decrease by -2,965 persons or -24.82 percent. On the one hand, the LAG-Hermagor thus suffers strongly from the brain drain phenomenon, since a significant part of the further loss of young women (15-49 years) of childbearing age can be statistically predicted until 2050; -905 persons or -25.50 percent. This will further weaken the economic and social vitality of the region, as women provide a majority of care. The number of young males (ages 15-49) will decrease by -727 persons over the forecast period (-19.03 percent).

The number of very old persons (75-100 years) will grow by +951 persons or +36.48 percent. The proportion of very old women will increase just as much +455 persons or +29.19 percent. The intergenerational support rate, a statistical measure of private/domestic support, will increase from 0.57 to 1.10 um or +193 percent. This means that currently, statistically, 100 persons of age (50-64 years) support 57 very elderly persons (75-100 years). This mathematical value will increase sharply to 110 persons in need of support per 100 persons (50-64 years) by 2050. An approximate doubling of the current private care intensity can be assumed.

³ The EU LEADER-Region Hermagor is similar to the KEM-Region and representative. The local community Stockenboi is not included. A more precise dataset does not exist for this space section.

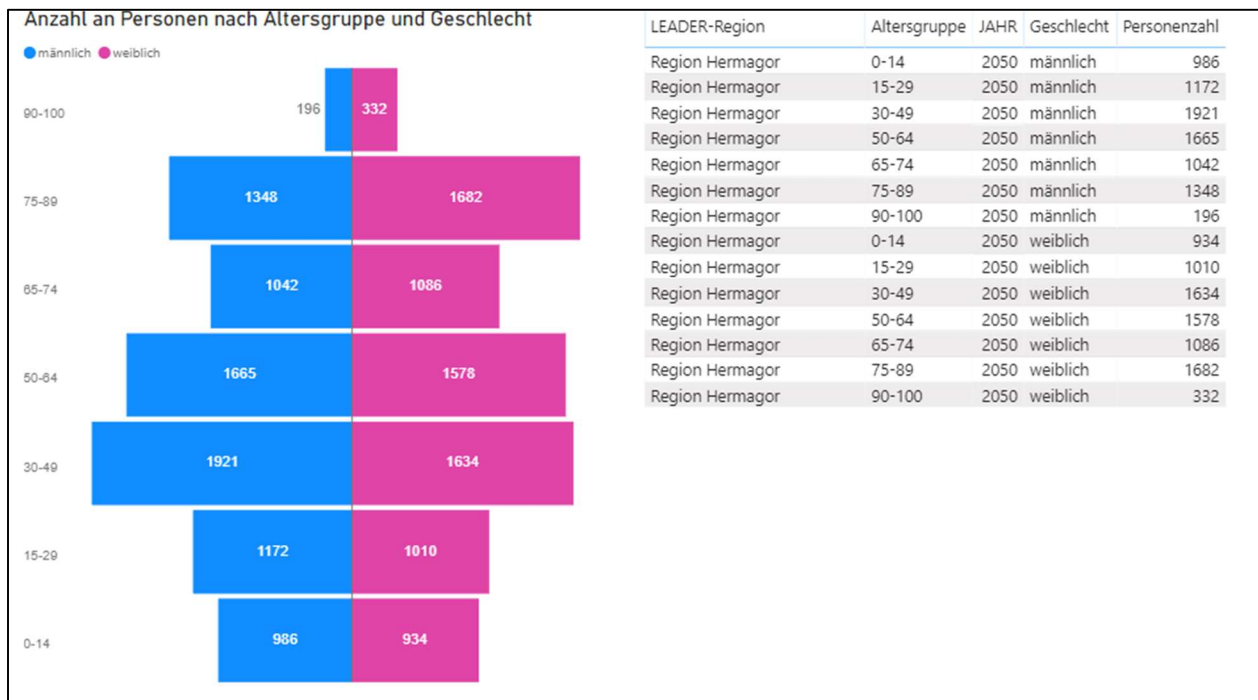


Figure 6. Age and gender structure LEADER-Region Hermagor 2050, forecast. Statistik Austria. Extract from the demographic dashboard Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. Zametter (2021).⁴

Demographic trends in the whole region are negative. The political district of Hermagor is severely affected by emigration, and loss of young people due to limited training and employment opportunities in the region. There are no large cities so students from the Upper Gail Valley attend the secondary schools in Lienz, while students from the lower Gail valley move towards the extended educational offer in Villach (each 30 to 40 minutes commute distance). These negative population losses are evident also in the state of Carinthia. Carinthia is the only province in Austria that is forecast to lose population by 2050.

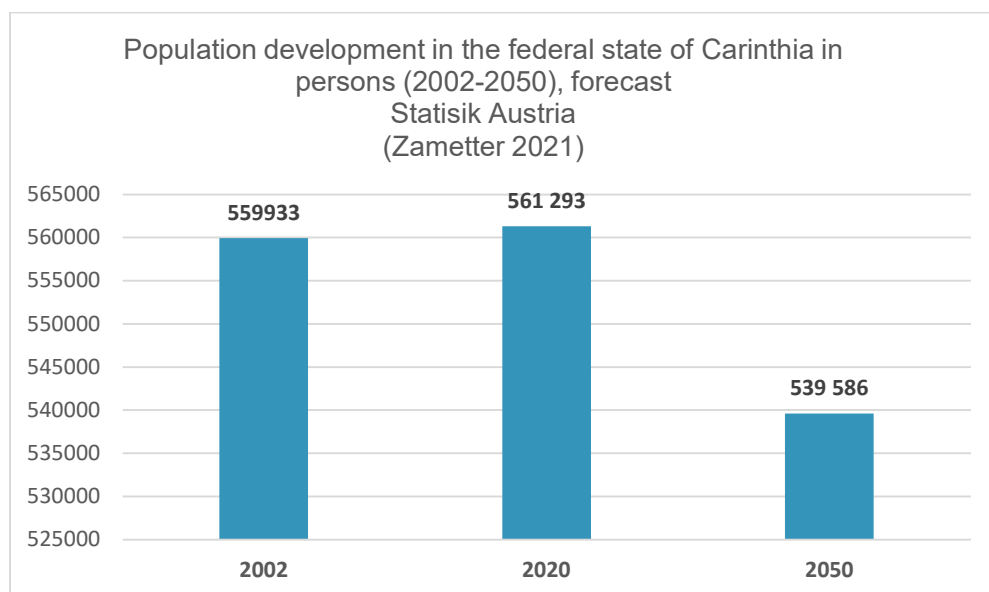


Figure 7. Population development 2002-2050 in persons of the federal state of Carinthia, forecast. Statistik Austria.

The state of Carinthia will lose -20,347 people (-3.63 percent) over the forecast period (Figure 7). Only 20 of the 132 municipalities show a positive population trend in the forecast model. The largest population losses are recorded in the upper Carinthian area (Figure 8). Population growth was recorded in the capital city of Klagenfurt, the technology city of

⁴ The EU LEADER-Region Hermagor is similar to the KEM-Region and representative. The local community Stockenboi is not included. A more precise dataset does not exist for this space section.

Villach and some of the surrounding communities in Carinthia's central region. This area benefits primarily from national and international immigration. The universities and large innovative companies are located there. The income opportunities are also higher.

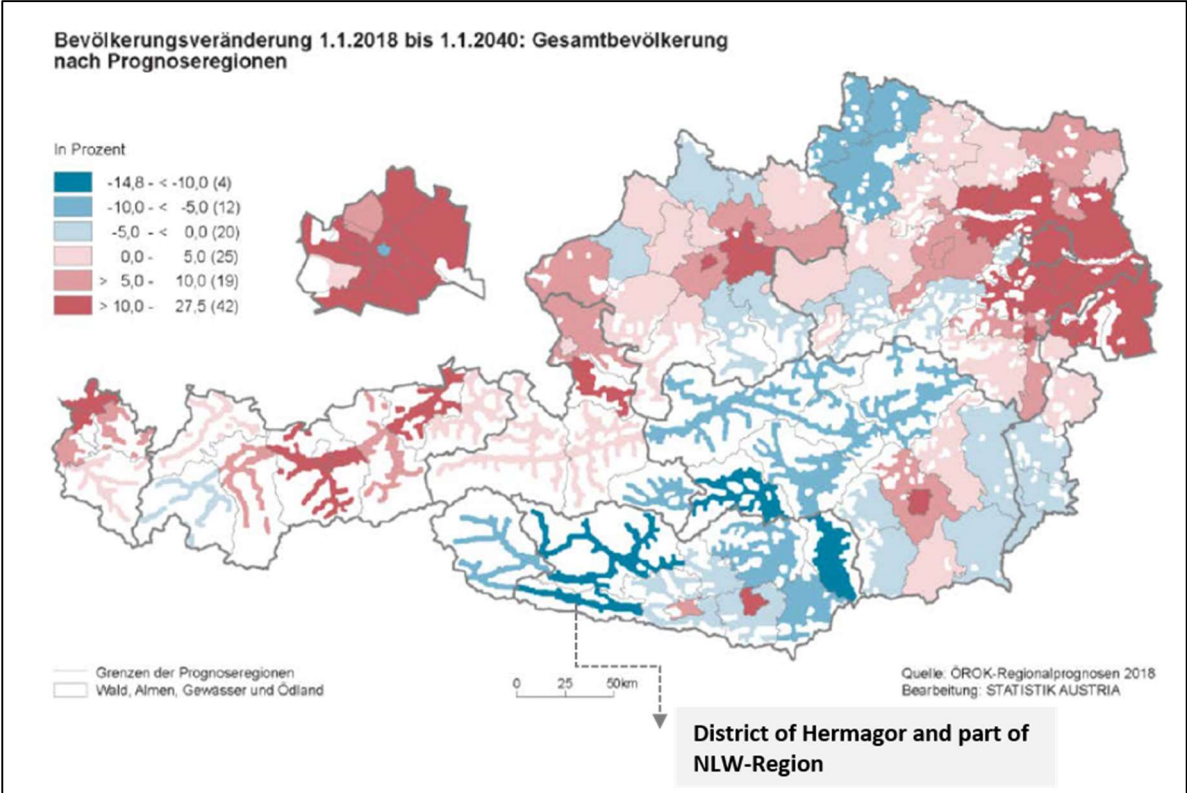


Figure 8. Population development 2018-2040 forecast, by federal states and districts. Statistik Austria. Adapted by Zametter (2021).

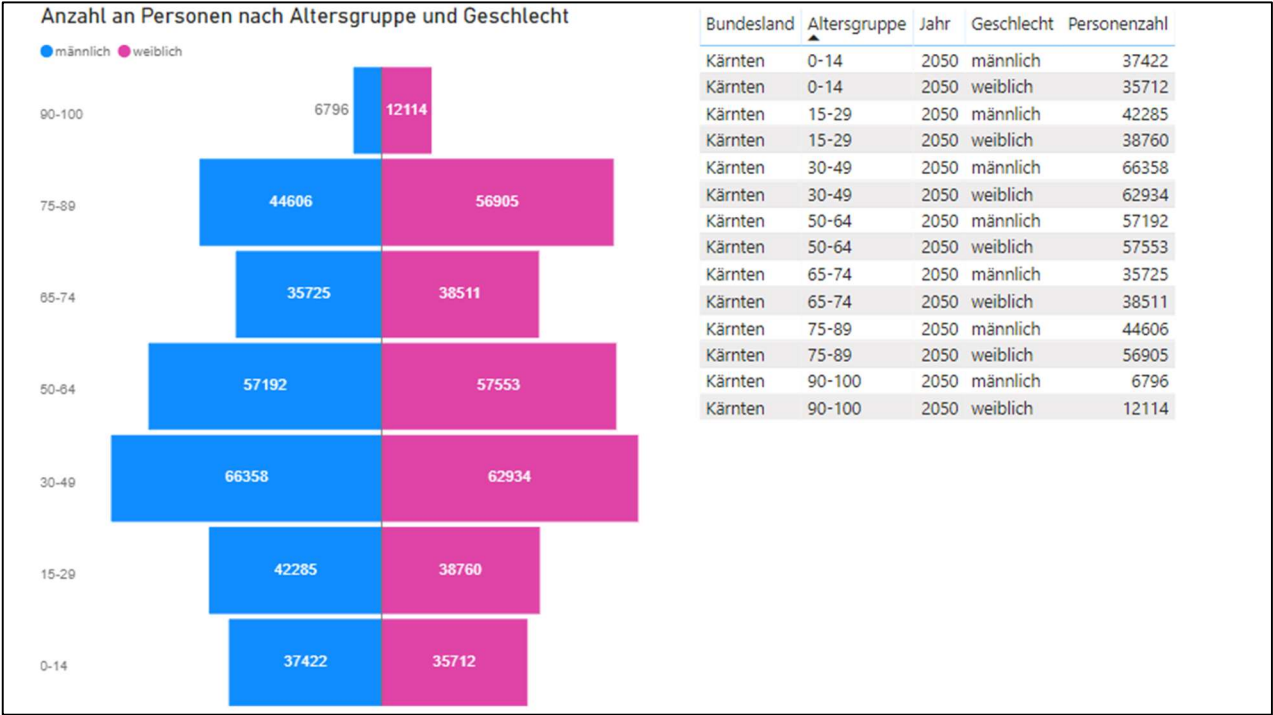


Figure 9. Age and gender structure federal State of Carinthia 2050, forecast. Statistik Austria. Extract from the demographic dashboard Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. Zametter (2021).

In the 2020 to 2050 forecast model, some of the trends from the past intensify significantly (Figure 9). For example, the proportion of children (0 to 14 years old) reduces by -7,157 persons or -9.47 percent. This will bring massive changes in

terms of school locations and child care. In many places, school classes will continue to shrink. The proportion of young people (15 to 29 years old) will decrease by -10,440 people by 2050 (-12.09 percent). This loss of talent will be missed by the economy in the form of skilled workers. The universities and the education location will also be massively affected by this, as a reduction in demand for study places by Carinthian high school graduates could be the consequence. The share of the working population (15 to 64 years) will decrease by -57,443 persons by 2050 (-15.90 percent). This will have a negative impact on the state's business location and competitiveness. The number of young women into childbearing age (15-49 years) will decrease by -16,490 persons by 2050 (-14.76 percent). This will enormously weaken the social and economic vitality of the state. The number of very old people (75-100 years) will increase by +49,954 persons by 2050 (+80.25 percent). According to the forecast, 112,204 persons of this age cohort will live in Carinthia in 2050.

In order to mitigate this trend and to improve the structural data at all levels (municipality, LEADER region and country), the province of Carinthia is launching a Masterplan for rural areas (2020/2021). This will also focus on making the tourism sector more sustainable and increasing the number of green jobs, increase in regional energy supply and the bioeconomy too. Overall, the issue of sustainability will become a development factor in all areas of the state.⁵

2.2.4. Economic context

The number of enterprises (permanent establishments) provides information about the professional opportunities in an area (Figure 10). In the NLW region, the number of business establishments grew by +56 business establishments (+2.4 percent) between 2015 and 2018. All sectors of the economy grew during the period under review. The largest increases were recorded in the tertiary sector of the economy (+34 establishments/+2,68 percent), which also includes the tourism sector. The growing tourism sector also offers opportunities for the primary sector (agriculture +7 establishments/+0,89 percent) and the secondary sector (crafts +15 establishments/+5,70 percent). This cycle generates important growth effects for the area. Tourism acts as a stimulus for the economy.

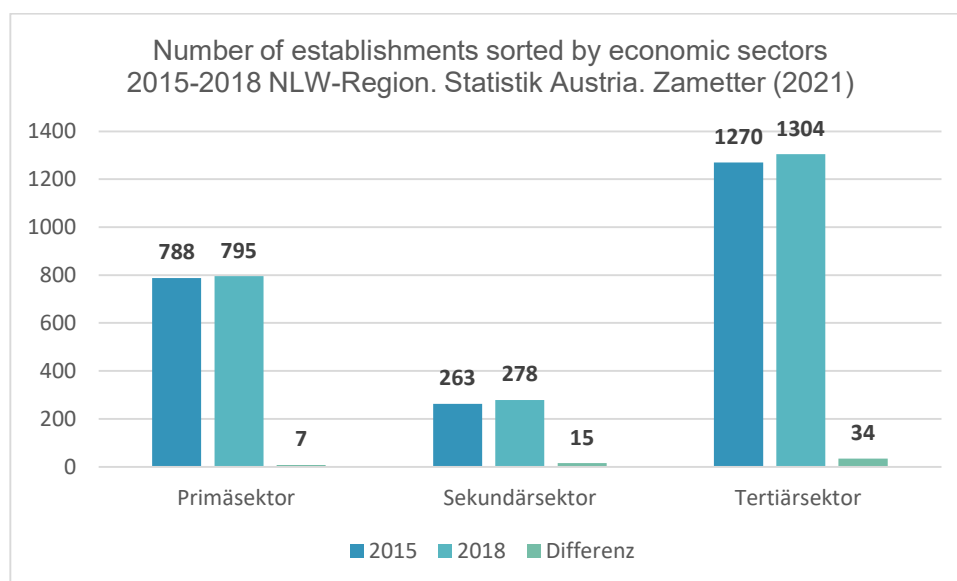


Figure 10. Development of permanent establishments by economic sectors. Statistik Austria. Own compilation. Zametter (2021).

The following data are taken from the WIBIS Carinthia (Economic Policy Information System) Carinthia⁶. They refer to the political districts of the province. The district of Hermagor comprises the municipalities Lesach Valley, Kötschach-Mauthen, Dellach, Kirchbach, Hermagor-Pressegger See, Gitschtal and St. Stefan. There are no data which are tailored to the NLW tourism region. This results from the different regionalization. The district of Hermagor therefore comprises around 86 percent of the total population of the NLW-Region. The data are therefore not exact, but representative to a certain extent. In regional development, it is often necessary to work with average values due to a lack of data (especially at the local level of the municipalities). Nevertheless, important development trends can be identified, which can also apply to the total NLW area.

⁵ Masterplan for rural areas in Carinthia. URL: <https://www.ktn.gv.at/Service/News?nid=31970> (13.4.2021).

⁶ WIBIS Kärnten. URL: <https://wibis.kwf.at/> (20.4.2021).

In 2019, the NLW region recorded 5.530 dependent employees (an increase of +203 people) since 2015, with tourism being a major employer and driver. 48.1 percent of the dependent employees are female. Thus, the value is higher than in the province of Carinthia (46.4 percent) and the Republic of Austria (45.5 percent) (average values). The value for the NLW region has increased by +0.4 percent since 2015, in contrast to the average and comparative values (Figure 11).

However, after the growth phase, this trend reduces in comparison. The destination cannot compete with the dynamics of the state and the federal government. The dynamics in development would need more innovative industries (keyword: digitalization and start-ups). Through the goal to become the most sustainable tourism region in Austria, new impulses come to the region. Likewise, a 30,000m² inter-municipal business park was created in Hermagor for the settlement of companies in 2020 (<https://www.karnische-region.com/>).

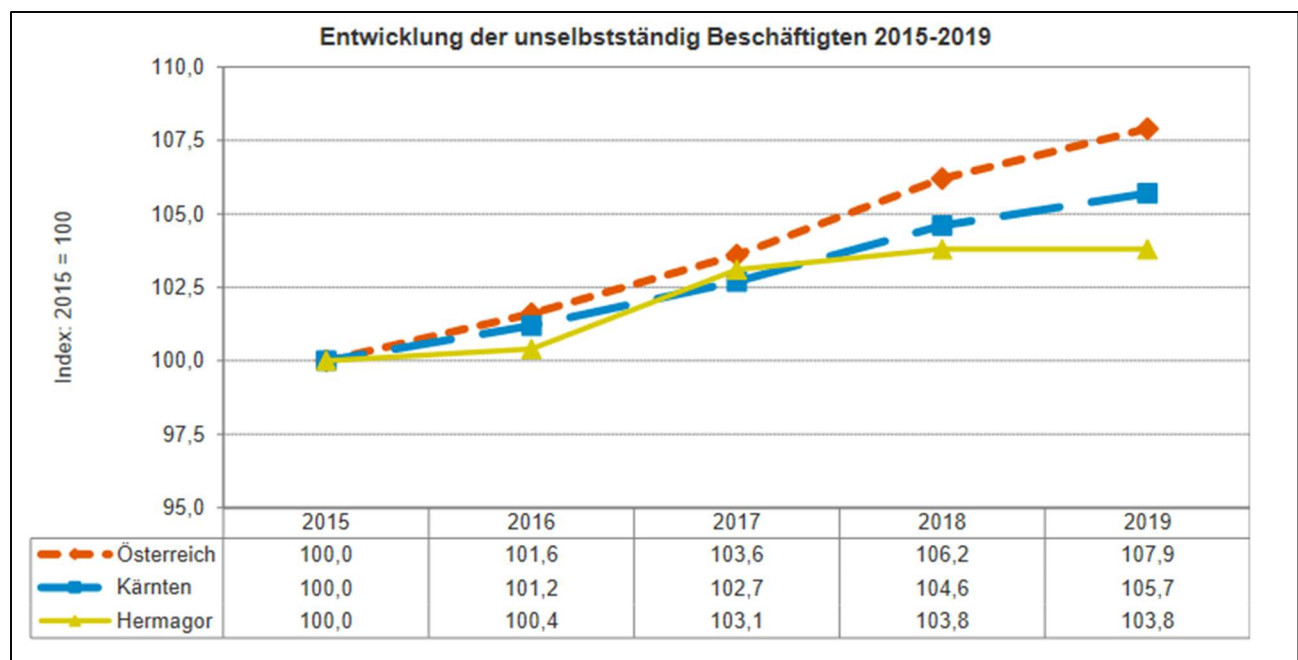


Figure 11. Development of employment (2015-2019) (WIBIS, 2019, p. 5)

The unemployment is 5.8% and has decreased from 7.7% in 2015. It is lower than in Carinthia (8.8%) and Austria (7.4%). However, it has increased for women (from 44.1% in 2015 to 47% in 2019) (WIBIS, 2019, p. 8). The unemployment rate has been low in the destination for many years. This is the result of high out-migration and low return migration. Nevertheless, initiatives are currently being taken to create new jobs (inter-municipal business parks or the construction of the Enercharge Campus in Kötschach-Mauthen / the most modern production facility for electric charging stations in Europe).

While 2.9% of the adult population have a University degree, this has decreased by 0.2, while high school diplomats which comprise 10.7% of the population have increased by 1.5%. More than half of the population has an apprenticeship or master craft examination (52.3%) (Figure 12). The more highly qualified residents mostly work away from home as weekly commuters in Klagenfurt (the capital of Carinthia) or in the technology city of Villach (Infineon's main plant). Carinthia's central region offers more career opportunities and higher incomes. Gradually, however, interest in rural areas as a business location is also increasing, as more and more necessary qualifications have been built up and are becoming possible in rural areas as well (keyword: home office or distance learning). Especially a healthy and ecological tourism enhances the region as an economic location. there are already settlements and influxes due to the high environmental quality and the well-developed tourist offer. More and more locals are taking advantage of the tourism opportunities.

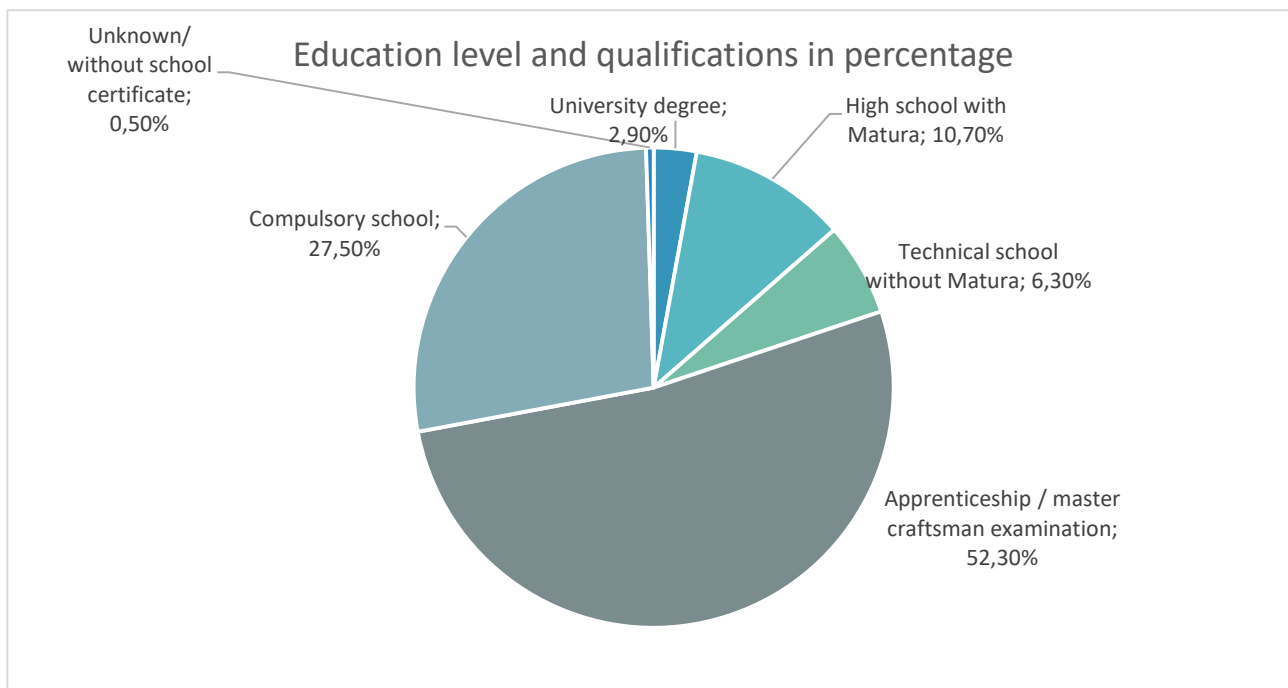


Figure 12. Level of education and qualifications in percentage (calculated from data in WIBIS, 2019)

In Hermagor there are 622 employer companies that represent 0.21% of the Austrian employer companies in Austria. As Figure 13 and Figure 14 show, employees are employed in small businesses (1-9 and 10-49 employees) to a larger share than in Carinthia and Austria.

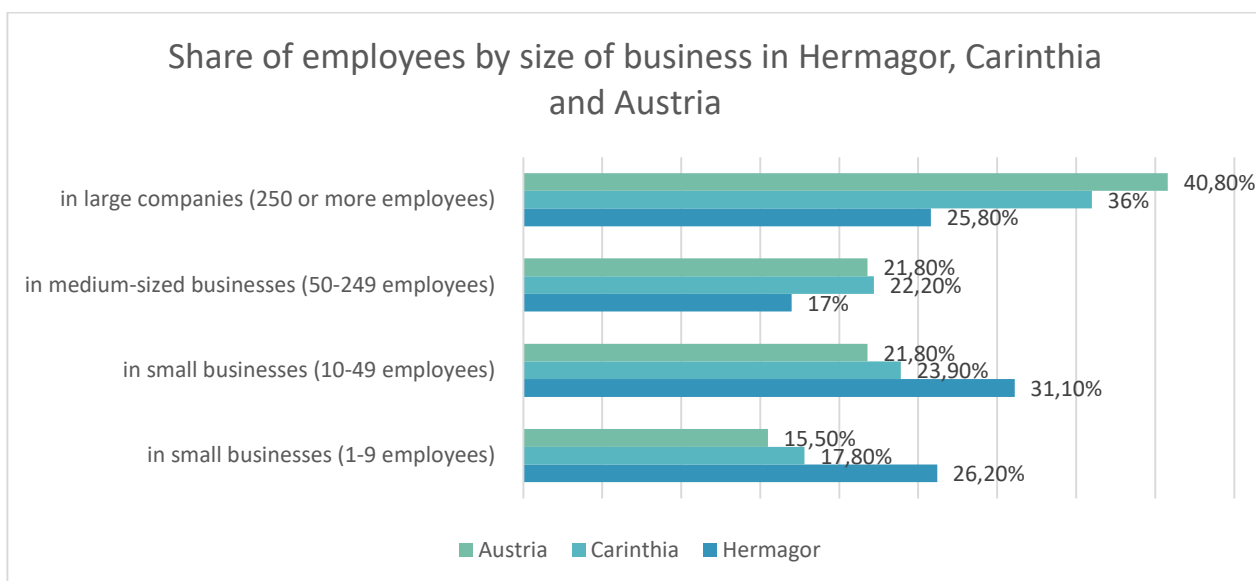


Figure 13. Share of employees by size of business (calculated from data in WIBIS, 2019, in %)

Share of employees by business size in the Hermagor district in 2019

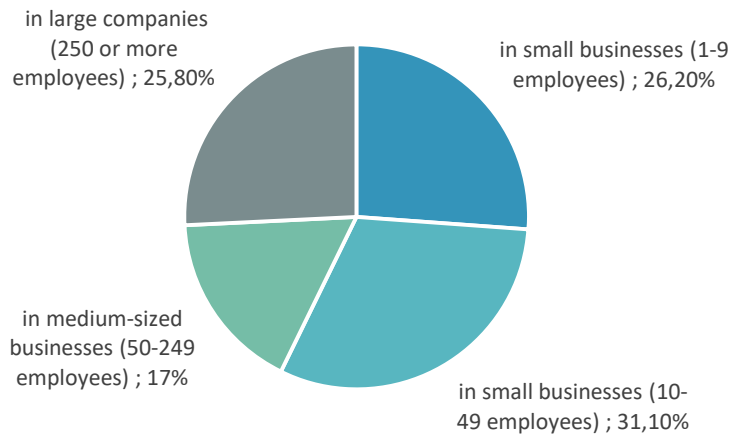


Figure 14. Share of employees by business size in the Hermagor district in 2019 (calculated from data in WIBIS, 2019)

The economic structure is characterized by a good mix in the secondary and tertiary sectors which is in line with trends at the regional and national level (Figure 15).⁷ The agricultural sector employs a small share of workers, and this has declined by -7.9% since 2015, while in Carinthia overall it has declined by -2.5% and it has grown by 2.2% in Austria. However, agriculture plays an important role for the development of sustainable tourism in the region. It is a job and a source of income, it supports regional (organic) food and in combination with the rental of rooms (farm holidays), it provides for access to diversified accommodations. These different offers support ecotourism and the Slow Food Travel region. Unfortunately, the number of farms is decreasing year by year. However, there is still a critical mass of farms in the area. Especially the young see less and less perspectives in agriculture. This is where we have to start. The tourism sector in particular can be built up as a decisive buyer of regional products. this secures the farms and leads to a higher degree of regional resilience.

Percentage of employed people by sector

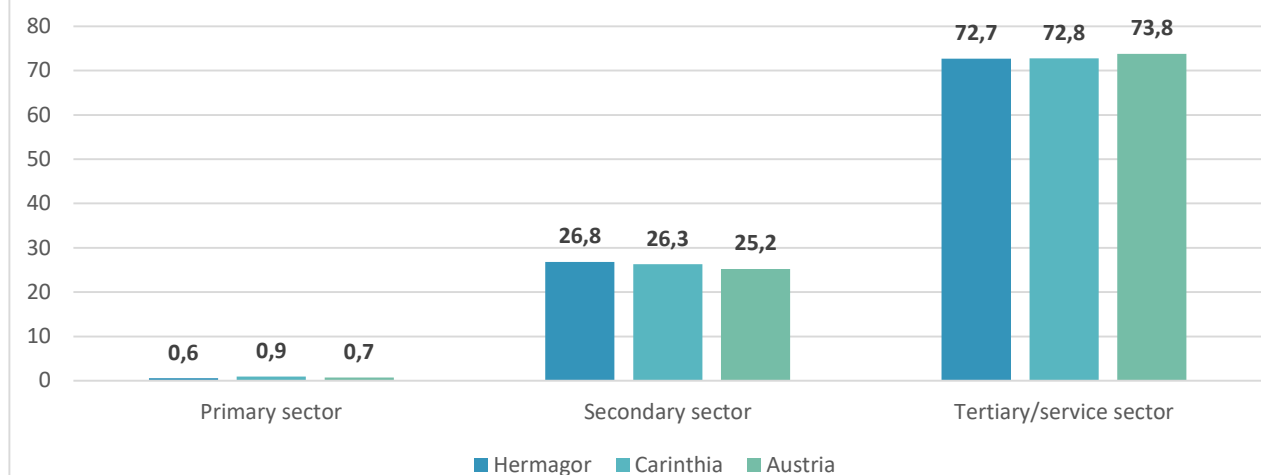


Figure 15. Percentage of employees by sector (WIBIS, 2019)

The strongest sectors include accommodation and catering (approximately 1,000 employees), trade and repair (approximately 860 employees) and health care (approximately 570 employees), such as the Gailtal clinic in Hermagor and the state hospital in Laas, as well as administrative regulations at the municipal and district level. The tourism sector is relatively strong and the district of Hermagor is ranked 1st in Carinthia. In Hermagor, accommodation and catering account for 24.4% of the employment in the service sector as compared to 9.5% in Carinthia and 8% in Austria (WIBIS, 2019). In the NLW, this equals 22.4% (Table 4 and Table 5).

⁷ Please also see the above figure for the structure of workplaces by sector.

Table 4. Key industries in terms of dependent employees in percent 2019 (tertiary sector/excerpt)⁸

Trade, repair	Traffic	Accommodation and Gastronomy	Information and Communication	Insurance	Business Services	Public Administration, education, health and social services
19,6%	7,5%	24,4% (top value in Carinthia)	0,3% (lowest value in Carinthia)	5%	6,6%	32,9%

The information and communication sector is still underdeveloped in the destination. The expansion of the fast internet is currently underway. The Corona-pandemic has improved this access. Growth can be expected in the coming years. The percentage of employed people in the tourism industry is the highest in Carinthia. This shows the enormous importance of tourism for the region. For this reason, there must be further development and modernization. In addition, synergies must be sought between tourism and other sectors in the manufacturing and craft industries. These sectors must also be developed in a mutually complementary manner in order to reduce path dependencies.

Table 5. Key industries in terms of dependent employees in percent 2019 (secondary sector/excerpt)⁹

Production of goods	Food and beverages products	Timber	Metalworking	Installations	Energy and water supply, waste disposal and recycling	Construction
34%	15,9%	29% (Key sector in the region); Leading Company: Norcia Hasslacher Timber	20,4%	19,6%	13,8% (Plays an increasingly important role); Pioneers in the region	52,2%

The regional energy production is becoming increasingly important. In Kötschach-Mauthen, the Klauss family has been a pioneer in this field for over 100 years. The family is currently building Europe's most modern e-fuelling station production facility on over 3000m² with 180 jobs (green jobs) are planned, and the entire world will be supplied with them. This will in turn bring new innovations to the destination.¹⁰

The monthly gross median income in Hermagor is €2,200 as compared to Austria at €2,648. Despite it being lower than the national average, it has increased by 2.8% between 2014 and 2018. However, a substantial gap exists between women (€ 1,847) and men (€ 2,541). The regional income is lower than the comparative values because tourism, as an important employer, does not pay high wages. However, there is also movement in the market due to Corona and the increasing shortage of skilled workers. It is possible that wages will be raised a little. Also, new companies bring skilled workers to the region and this will increase the average wages. The destination will approach the average values of Carinthia in the next few years. The average values of Austria will not be reached because Carinthia as a whole does not pay high wages compared to Austria. The highest wages in Austria can be found in Graz/Styria (automotive industry), Vienna (banking and administration) or in Linz/Upper Austria (metal industry). These industries are missing in Carinthia. Carinthia is primarily a tourist destination.

2.2.5. Tourism context

If on the one hand NLW is a unified destination managed by one Destination Management Organisation, on the other it has three different areas characterised by three different positionings. In all areas, tourism is mainly concentrated in the winter and summer months. However, the three different areas have witnessed different tourism trends (Ramona et al., 2014). Weissensee and Pressegger See have a tradition in summer tourism. Nassfeld has developed into one of the top

⁸ WIBIS. URL: https://wibis.kwf.at/fileadmin/user_upload/wibis_karnten/regionsprofile/2020-10/B203_PROFIL_2_Daten_27.10.2020.pdf (20.4.2020).

⁹ WIBIS. URL: https://wibis.kwf.at/fileadmin/user_upload/wibis_karnten/regionsprofile/2020-10/B203_PROFIL_2_Daten_27.10.2020.pdf (20.4.2020).

¹⁰ Enercharge. URL: <https://enercharge.at/> (20.4.2021). Alps-Adriatic energy (AAE). URL: <https://aae.at/> (20.4.2021).

winter ski areas in Austria due to its altitude and relatively safe snow conditions as well as state-of-the-art technical facilities. Lesachtal has developed for both summer and winter tourism.

Nassfeld-Pressegger See



Winter World Ski resort Nassfeld © nassfeld.at

The Nassfeld skiing area became connected to the higher pastureland thanks to the military road to Nassfeld/Passo Pramollo built during the First World War. Skiing, however, remained a marginal activity for few people until the 1960s, when local entrepreneurs from Hermagor and the wider Carinthia region started to invest in tourist infrastructure development and led to the development of an international skiing destination, the largest in Carinthia and one of the largest in Austria. In 1999, the construction of a cable railway from Tröpolach to the ski slopes, coupled with the construction of a long downhill ski run, helped to develop once isolated towns such as Tröpolach into communities fully devoted to tourism. Tourism has become more international and has also developed its second season with a wide range of summer activities. Today, Nassfeld is one of the top 10 ski resorts in Austria and has 30 modern cable cars (Figure 16). It has a skiable area of 110 km with the longest run of 7.6 km.

Kötschach-Mauthen in addition has moved towards energy self-reliance based on water, wind power, and biomass, and these efforts towards becoming an Energy Model Community have brought a certain reputation to the area which is regarded as an excellent example for energy conservation and use of renewable resources.



Summer World Pressegger See © www.nassfeld.at

In the summer the dominant types of holiday in the region are mountain and hiking holidays, lakeside holidays and bike holidays. These comprise the Pressegger See with its surrounding area, the mountain region of the Carnic Alps and the Gailtal Alps, as well as the Nassfeld "Carinthia's Adventure Mountain No.1", with its diversely developed tourist infrastructure.



Sunrise Madritsche © www.nassfeld.at



Figure 16. Map of the ski slopes in Nassfeld. Source: https://www.snow-online.com/ski-resort/nassfeld-hermagor_trailmap.html

Lesachtal



Liesing in Lesachtal © Daniel Zupanc

The eastern part of the Hermagor district, the Lesachtal, has had a different development. Due to its remoteness and lower competitiveness vis-a-vis Nassfeld, and a less conducive natural environment, ski development did not take off save for a small ski site. In 1995, Lesachtal was named by journalists "Europe's most natural holiday destination" and "Landscape of the Year" and later was awarded by Friends of Nature International an example of sustainable tourism in the Alpine region. Both towns of Mauthen and Lesachtal became part of the *Bergsteigerdorf* (Mountaineering Village), a certified quality seal for tourist areas that support gentle and sustainable alpine tourism. Mountaineering villages are characterised by the quality of their landscape and environment and are committed to the preservation of their local cultural and natural values. In 2015, Lesachtal was a founding member of the Slow Food Travel region. More recently, in 2019, the municipality of

Lesachtal and the association Development Initiative Lesachtal developed the project "Heilsame Landschaft Lesachtal" or Lesachtal Healing Landscape connecting nature to health and wellbeing.



Snowshoe hiking in the Lesachtaler mountains © Unterguggenberger

Weissensee



Slowtrail Weissensee © Peter Maier

To the north of Hermagor is Weissensee, which has long been involved as a nature-oriented tourism community. Weissensee is located in the region of the Gailtal Alps, in between the Drau and the Gailtal. It lies at 930 metres above sea level. The lake is 11.6 km long, 960 metres wide and has a maximum depth of 99 metres. Weissensee is the fourth largest lake in Carinthia with a total surface area of 6.5 square km. Weissensee is variously known as the cleanest lake in the Alps, Europe's highest altitude swimming lake, and the largest natural ice surface in Europe, promotes "Active summers in our therapeutic climate" and "gentle winter tourism". In the winter, different types of sports can be carried out, including ice skating, ice hockey, curling, but also scuba diving under the ice. Winter hiking, cross-country skiing as well as sleigh riding or riding with a fatbike are also possibilities in the area. The small family ski area with the ski school and ski hire, and the Weissensee Kids' Ski World features family-friendly ski slopes and the atmosphere of an easy-going ski area (Figure 17).



Winter at Weissensee © nassfeld.at

In the summer, the crystal-clear water of the lake allows for diving, cliff jumping, water skiing, wakeboarding, surfing, sailing, canoeing, SUP and fishing. All tourist accommodations have their own free beach access. Drinking water quality is at a balmy temperature up to 25° C and the location enjoys more than 2,000 hours of sunshine a year. The lakeshore is practically undeveloped and offers a special type of holiday landscape surrounded by nature. In the surrounding area it is possible to hike, bike, Nordic walking on 9 trails of varying degrees of difficulty, as well as and go horse backriding on over 200 km of trails. The local cuisine also offers fresh fish from the lake.

The lakeside resort is situated on the shore of the Weissensee within the Gailtal Alps mountain range. It can be reached from Greifenburg along the Drava and across the Kreuzberg Saddle to Gitschtal and Hermagor in the Gail Valley. In the 1970s, the town voted against a thoroughfare and against the construction of the waterfront area and since then its efforts have been amply awarded at the European level. Weissensee was awarded the "Alpine Pearls" destination (car-free holiday), the "European Prize for Tourism and Environment", the "European Village Renewal Award" and recently published the first evaluation of the Park management strategy for the nature park. In addition, the region is also known for its therapeutic climate and since 2005 it has been part of the Austria's Climate Alliance Communities (e5municipality). All these experiences show the commitment to preserving its landscape and natural environment.

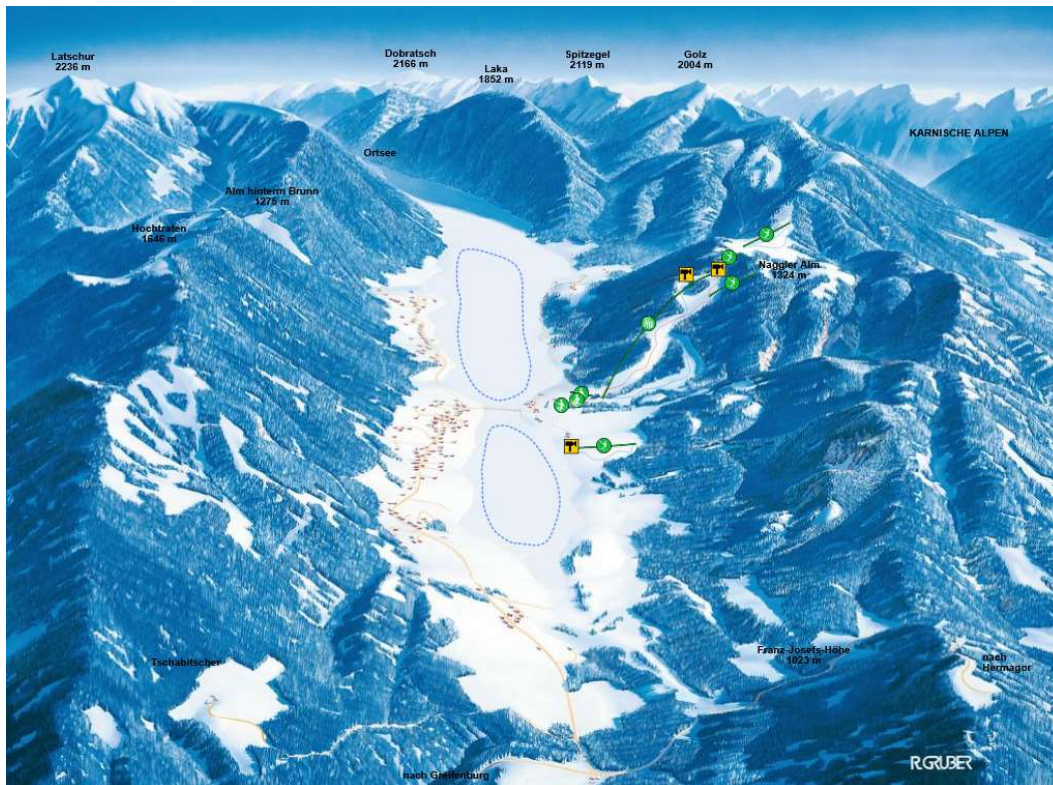


Figure 17. Winter map of Weissensee: <https://winter.intermaps.com/Weissensee>

Until 1999, tourism in the area was organized on a local scale with the district coordinating some reception and promotion functions and recognizing in the tourist companies an important role in coordinating activities at the valley level. These were fully public companies considered functional to the district and the state level much the same way as what still happens today for the Municipalities.

The turn of the century brought a radical change in the international and local tourist scenario with large effects in the destination which saw winter skiing booming and renewed interest in new summer destinations. This growth was also supported by the spread of the internet, the reduction of travel costs, and the change in behavior towards more experiential holidays. After the past few years, the time has come to rethink the tourism development strategy as new challenges await tourism organizations: renewed attention to safety, risk management and sustainability. The destination must respond to these challenges by strengthening the organizational efficiency of the territory, strengthening the brand and building ever more strongly on the values of the local population.

If from the point of view of the tourism organization, the territory of the NLW is included within a single marketing organisation (a European DMO), from a strategic point of view the tourist offer of the destination is divided into 3 macro-areas with different specificities and life cycles of the destination (Table 6).

Table 6. Characteristics of the three regions of the NLW

Macro area	Claim	Type of product	Accommodation	Main tourist	% overnight stays
Nassfeld-Presssegger See Kötschach-Mauthen Dellach Kirchbach Hermagor Gitschtal St. Stefan	<i>Hiking, biking and swimming in summer - skiing in winter. Holidays on the mountain and on the lake</i>	Mountain, lake Winter: Skiing, Summer: Hiking and swimming	98 hotels 744 of alternative accommodation (B&B, house guests) 9 campsites	International/national	39,8 % hotels 31,7 % alternative accommodation (B&B, house guests) 28,5 % Campsites
Lesachtal	<i>Switch off, hike</i>	Mountain:	19 hotels	International/nat	52,21 % hotels

	<i>& enjoy - offline vacation in the most natural valley in Europe.</i>	Winter: alpine skiing Summer: hiking	166 alternative accommodation (B&B, house guests) 2 campsites	ional	46,39 % alternative accommodation (B&B, house guests) 1,40 % Campsites
Weissensee	<i>Soft winter tourism and active summer in the nature park of the year. Vacation, relaxation and enjoyment.</i>	Lake, natural park Winter: Ice skating Summer: swimming	58 hotels 196 alternative accommodation (B&B, house guests) 6 campsites	International/national	47,7 % hotels 24,7 % alternative accommodation (B&B, house guests) 27,6 % Campsites

Figures are from summer 2020

Thanks to a first call for tenders for the project "Most Sustainable Tourism Region" in 2019 and a request for an Implementation concept in 2020, the destination has been working with public and private partners to develop a carbon neutral, climate friendly destination led by the Climate and energy model region Municipal Association and the Climate and Energy Model Region (KEM).

2.2. Analysis of the offer and tourism performance

2.2.1. Tourism capacity

Except for the municipality of Feistritz an der Gail, overnight tourism plays a relevant role in all municipalities. However, Hermagor with the Pressegger See and the Nassfeld area as well as Weissensee have clearly developed as the tourist communities of the destination NLW. They hold 72% of beds and 75% of overnight stays (Table 7). With Kötschach-Mauthen the share increases to almost 80%.

Table 7. Share of accommodation and number of beds by municipality

Gem. Publisher	Political	ACCOMMO DATION SATIn-USE	BETTEN / BEDS			ACCOMMO DATION SATIn-USE	BETTEN / BEDS (WITHOUT ADDITIONAL BEDS)		
	District	Total	(WITHOUT EXTRA BEDS)			Total			
	Community	(incl. campsites)				(incl. campsites)			
	Administrati ve		Total	Including			Total	Including	
	District		(excl. camping beds)				(excl. camping beds)		
	Commune								
				Commercial	Private			Commercial	Private
				(Hotels and similar Businesses, commercial	(incl.priv.ap artments/h ouses)			(Hotels and similar Businesses, commercial	(incl.priv.ap artments/h ouses)
				apartmen ts/houses)				apartmen ts/houses)	
		IN THE WINTER SEASON 2018/2019				IN THE SUMMER SEASON 2019			
20302	Dellach	30	295	140	155	35	319	140	178
20305	Hermagor Presseg	510	8883	5521	2950	530	8056	4637	3000
20306	Kirchbach	63	616	271	345	65	662	271	351
20307	Kötschach Mauthen	111	1250	516	590	120	1293	572	623
20316	Saint Stefan in Gai	24	222	103	119	42	350	162	158
20320	Gitschtal	36	861	351	212	36	859	329	212
20321	Lesachtal	158	1231	660	571	170	1570	715	734
20639	Weißensee	187	3170	2668	502	192	3238	2706	521
20723	Stockenboi	22	176	66	98	50	350	92	237
20707	Feistritz an der Gail	2	54	46	8	4	66	46	10
Destination NLW		1143	16758	10342	5550	1244	16763	9670	6024

For the Hermagor district, in 2019, the 1.691.974 overnight stays represent a 2.8% increase since 2015 (WIBIS, p. 21). Foreign travellers represent 72.7% of all travellers, which is higher than Carinthia (60.5%) but lower than Austria's at 73.8%. The rate of foreigners has increased 2.7% since 2015. **47.4% of all overnight stays were in commercial establishments** (Figure 18).

The average length of stay has generally decreased in recent decades. Whereas in the 1970s to the 1980s it was still common to devote 14 days during the main holiday period, today it is around 2-4 days with several short breaks throughout the year. Overall, tourism statistics show that the length of stay in private accommodation and campsites is slightly longer. In the destination NLW, the situation is much more favourable than the Austrian average. In summer it is at around 5 days, while in winter at 4.8 days. The average overnight stays is thus higher than in Carinthia (4) and Austria (3 nights in the summer and 4 in winter). However, the extent to which the Corona crisis will have an impact in this respect cannot be predicted in the longer term. In any case, the proportion of holidaymakers from Austria is likely to increase, also for the duration of the stay.

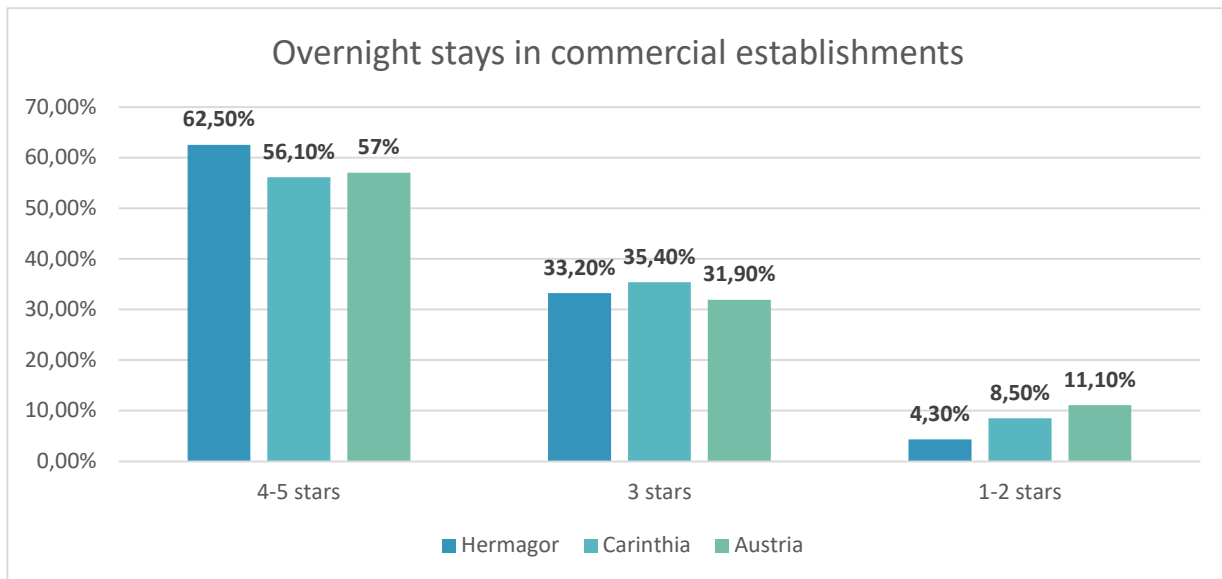


Figure 18. Overnight stays in commercial establishments in the Hermagor district (data from 2019)

Figure 19Figure 20 show the percentage of overnight stays by accommodation type but do not include overnight stays in farms, campsites and private homes.

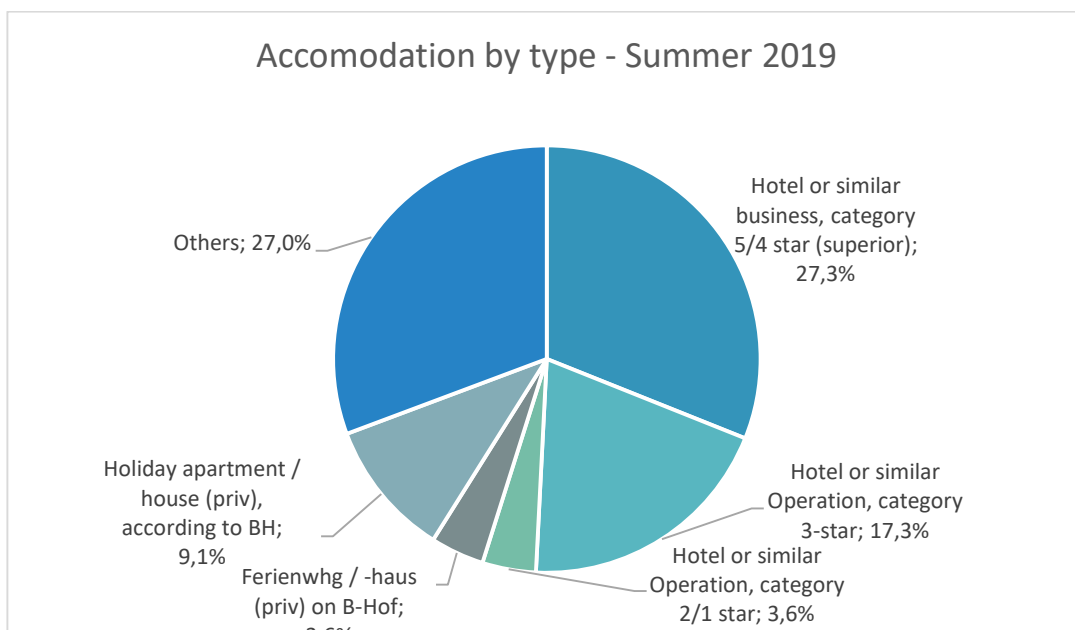


Figure 19. Accommodation by type in the summer 2019. Source: NLW Tourismus and Marketing, WEBMARK Statistik-Tools

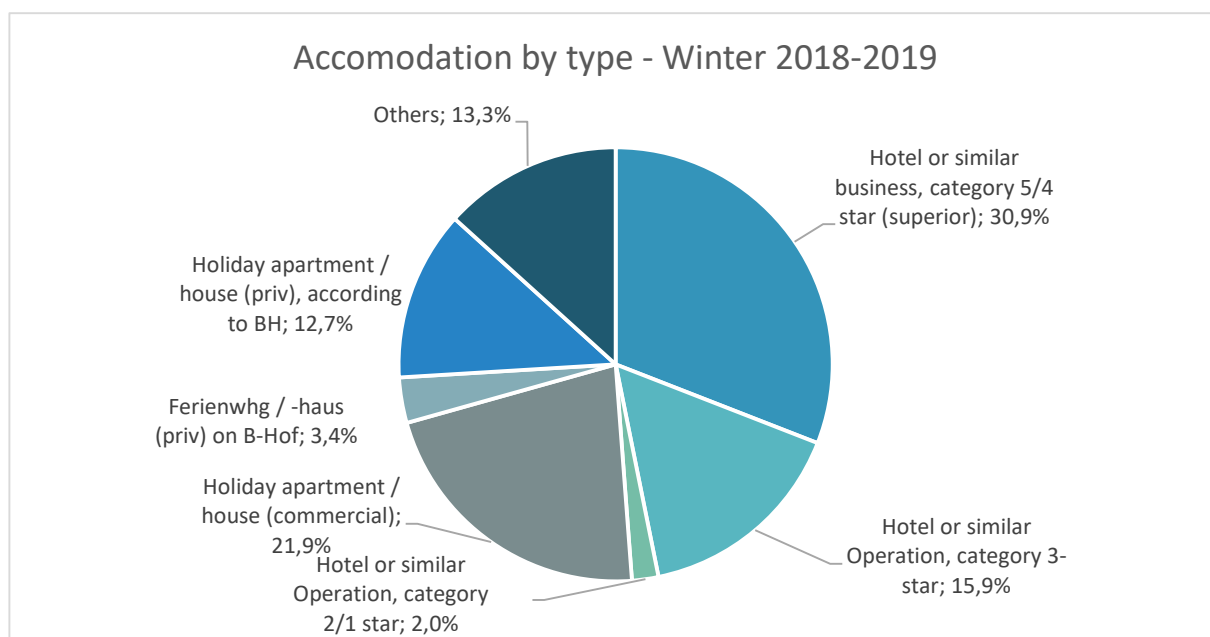


Figure 20. Accommodation by type – winter 2018-2019. Source: NLW Tourismus and Marketing, WEBMARK Statistik-Tools

In the Hermagor district, 3 star hotels represent the majority (50.9%) (Figure 21). 4-5 star hotels (21.6) are at a higher percentage than overall in Carinthia and lower than in Austria (23.5%). In Hermagor, the number of establishments have decreased by -2.5% as compared to Carinthia (-10.1%). 4-5 star hotels have increased by 8.7 since 2015, indicating a trend towards higher quality establishments, as compared to Carinthia (4.2) and Austria (4.9%) (Figure 10). 3 star and 2 star have decreased by 4.8 and 5.9% respectively.

The average expenditure per guest is in the Summer € 130-160 and in the Winter € 160-190. These expenses are composed of: Accommodation, Mobility (incl. mountain railroads), Food and drink and Other expenses.

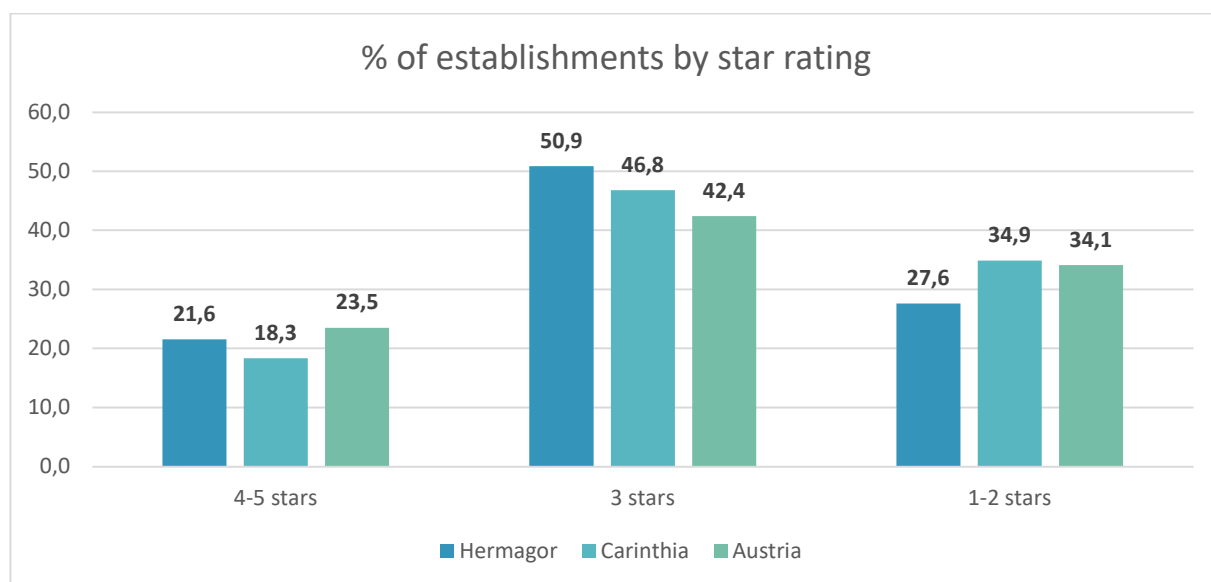


Figure 21. Comparison in the share of hotels by star rating between Hermagor, Carinthia and Austria as a whole (WIBI, 2019)

Overall, arrivals show a relatively stable positive upward development over the last ten years. In addition, the overnight figures show a slightly "wavy" development, but overall growing above average when compared to the Carinthian average. In 2009, the municipalities of the destination NLW recorded around 1.9 million overnight stays, and in 2019 already 2.2 million.

2.2.2. Infrastructural connections

The offer and relative performance of a tourist destination is also influenced by the mobility system. The extra and intra-destination infrastructure facilitates movement, itineraries and interconnections between territories, points of interest and tourist services. One of the most important factors that will influence the strategic tourism development of the NLW area is therefore the accessibility of the area and the way in which visitors can move in the destination by using alternative services to the use of private cars. It is therefore useful to outline the various possibilities to reach the destination, such as the major interchange logistic hubs and the possibilities of moving thanks to the public service.

Airplane

The closest airports to Hermagor are Klagenfurt Airport (74.2 kilometers), Trieste – Friuli Venezia Giulia Airport (89.4 kilometers), Ljubljana Jože Pučnik Airport (95.0 kilometers) and Salzburg Airport (82.4 miles / 132.7 kilometers).

Car

The most important traffic axis of the district is the B 111, the Gailtalbundesstraße. Through them, all municipalities are connected to the Carinthian central area. Other important traffic routes are the north-south crossings of the B90 via the Nassfeld-Pass and the B110 via the Plöckenpass. The traffic axis with the highest traffic volume is the B 111 - Gailtalbundesstraße.

from western Austria: Take the A10 motorway, passing through Tauern tunnel and Katschberg tunnel (toll gates) and take exit Feistritz/Drau. From there, follow the signs to Windische Höhe and Hermagor. You can also take the exit Spittal an der Drau, follow the B110 to Greifenburg. Continue on the B87 in the direction of Weissensee. Follow the road until Hermagor.

from eastern Austria: Take the A2 motorway (towards Italy) and exit at Hermagor/Gailtal. From there, follow B111 state road to Hermagor.

from Germany: Coming from Munich, either take the A10 motorway (see section “from western Austria”) or the A12 Inntal motorway up to exit Kufstein. From there, continue through Felbertauern tunnel (toll gates) to Lienz, the Gailbergsattel, Kötschach-Mauthen and Hermagor.

from southern Italy: Take the motorway towards Udine and Austria. You can either exit the motorway at Pontebba and continue through Pontebba village along Passo Pramollo mountain pass to Nassfeld or stay on the motorway towards Tarvisio and exit at Hermagor/Gailtal.

Train/bus

All municipalities of the destination NLW are accessible by train and through the public bus network. Stations in Hermagor and Greifenburg-Weissensee are connected through the station shuttle Carinthia (Last Mile Service) as well as other flexible mobility offers.

The most important providers in the entire destination are MVG Mobilbüro & Verkehrsmanagement GmbH for bus operations and ÖBB for rail transport.

The 32 km long Gailtal Valley Railway runs from Arnoldstein to Hermagor. It is a single-track line of the ÖBB, has been electrified and it operates every hour. The wagons are modern and suitable for cycling transport. However, only the municipalities of St. Stefan in the Gailtal and Hermagor-Presegger See can be reached via this line. Feistritz an der Gail can be reached via the nearby Nötsch station in the Gail Valley.

Starting from Germany, travel to the region by train is via Salzburg, from where stations Spittal-Millstätter See and Villach can be reached in the direction of Klagenfurt. From Spittal-Millstätter See station, it is possible to take the S1 in the direction of Lienz (Osttirol) to Greifenburg-Weissensee station. From western Austria, the region is also best reached by detour via Salzburg. Compared to the car, however, this is associated with a time loss of 1.5 to 2 hours.

The municipalities of Dellach, Gitschtal, Kirchbach, Kötschach-Mauthen and Lesachtal can be reached from Hermagor-Presegger See station via further regional bus lines which are barrier free and suitable for carrying bikes. The Carinthia train station shuttle takes all guests arriving by train and bus at Hermagor, Greifenburg or Oberdrauburg train station to their accommodation and also to selected excursion destinations in the region at a reasonable rate.

Special incentives have also been developed and guests travelling with the ÖBB, receive a 10 percent discount on the full-price day ticket in the Nassfeld ski area.

Bike

The network of cycle paths in the district of Hermagor is well developed (Figure 22). The Gailtal cycle path runs for 85 km from Villach to Kötschach-Mauthen and has an altitude difference of 200 m. A secondary route connects the Gitschtal and the Weissensee to the Gailtal cycle path. The issue of access is so crucial to the territory that it forms the backbone of several initiatives reported in the KEM report. With over 950 km of mountain and road cycle routes, there are a number of services that support transport of bikes: trains, buses and cable cars and lifts. Individual transfers for hikers and bikers are also available in the different locations.

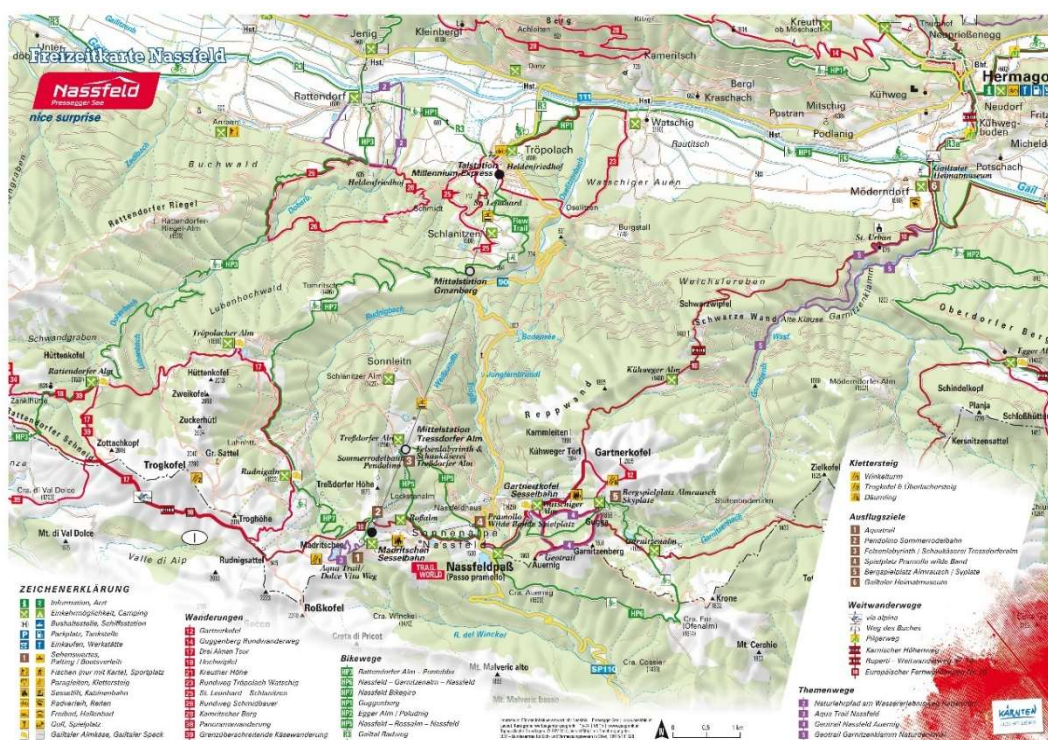


Figure 22. Extract leisure map Hermagor © nassfeld.at

In the destination

In the holiday destination Nassfeld-Pressegger, all regular bus services are available to guests free of charge every hour thanks the "+ CARD holiday" or the Basic Guest Card which are issued directly by the accommodation provider. Regional bus services are also freely available with the Lesachtaler Guest Card Basic, while the "Erlebnisspass Mobil +" at Weissensee guarantees travel from the train station in Greifenburg to the hotel in the Weissensee Nature Park.

In Weissensee, the nature park bus runs every 30 minutes in summer and in winter while there is an hourly connection from the valley station to the mountain railway to Naggl with a minibus.

2.2.3. Tourism trends and positioning

The characteristics and dynamics of tourism demand emerge from the analysis of tourist flows. For this purpose, the data relating to arrivals and presences for the year 2019 were analysed (Figure 23). In the winter of 2018-2019, 182,023 arrivals were recorded in the winter, and 881,482 overnight stays were registered within the municipalities of the NLW destination, with an average stay of 4.8 days. In the summer of 2019, 261,765 arrivals and 1,324,687 overnight stays were also

recorded, with a slightly higher length of stay of 5 days. In the summer bed utilization is on average higher (33%) than in the winter (21,7%).

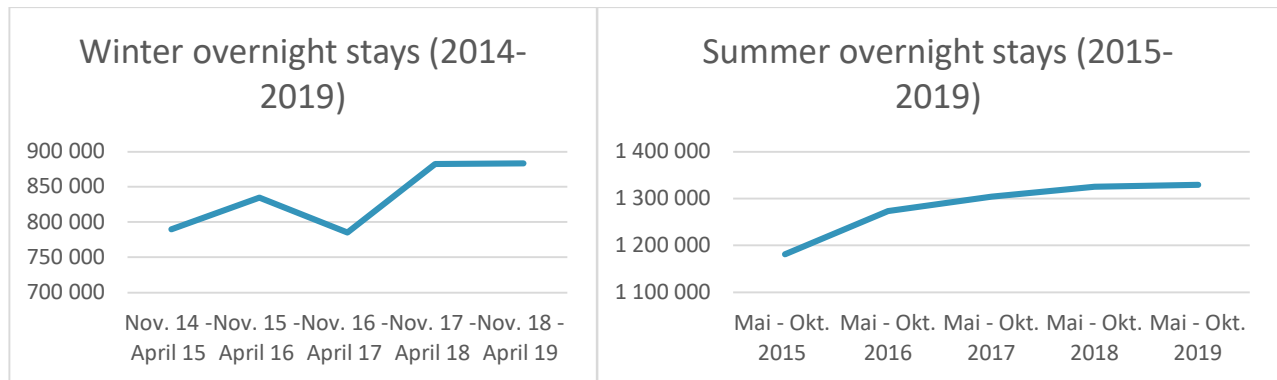


Figure 23. Trends in overnight stays in Winter and Summer between 2014 and 2019 (NLW Tourismus and Marketing)

The distribution of the countries of origin shows a 66% share of foreigners staying an average of 5.2 nights in the winter and 62% presence of foreigners in the summer, staying an average of 5.7 nights. The most representative nationalities in the winter are Austria (29.5%), Germany (23.5%), the Czech Republic (9.3%) and Hungary (7.5%) (Figure 24).

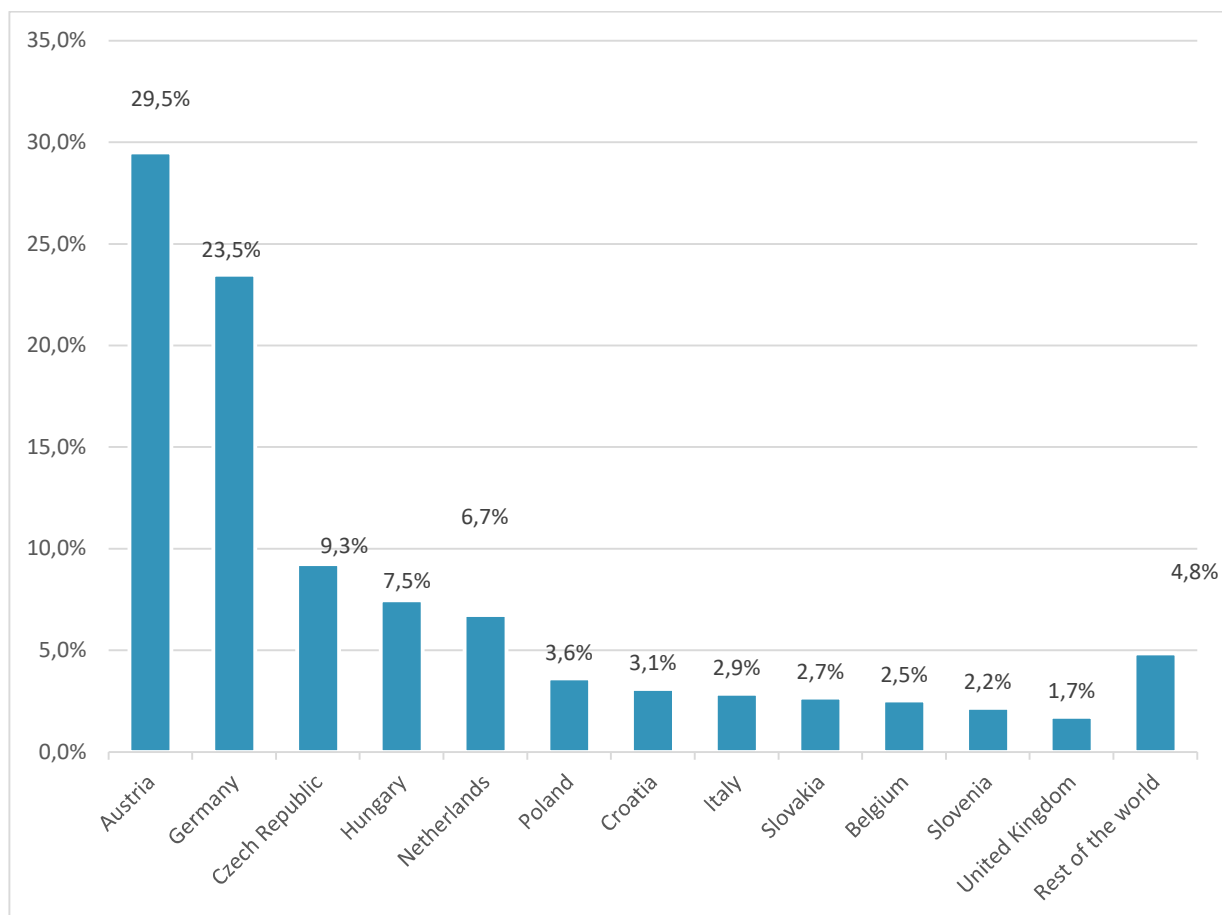


Figure 24. Visitors by country of origin in the winter (Source: Tourismus and Marketing, winter 2019)

In the summer, most visitors are from Germany (47.3%), Austria (29.1%) and the Netherlands (9.9%) (Figure 25). These values show the importance of the national market, Germany and the eastern countries. Based on the number of tourists, the NLW is the second destination in the State of Carinthia after Villach.

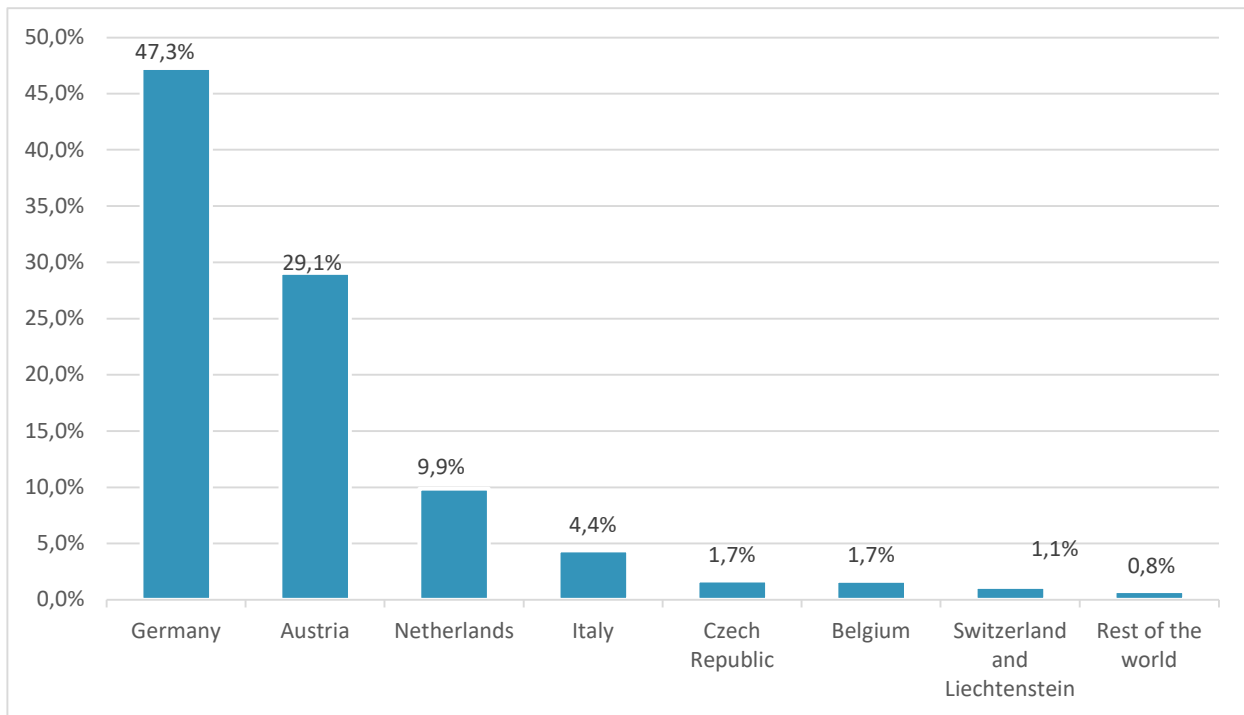


Figure 25. Visitors by country of origin in the summer (Source: Tourismus and Marketing, winter 2019)

The growth trend of the destination towards varied, high quality and sustainable forms of tourism shows how there is great propensity for differentiation and product innovation, and there are already various strategies and projects to pursue a vision towards increasing sustainability. The following are important examples that go in the direction of rethinking the offer and creating a new proposal of use of the territory starting from what exists from its culture and its unique characteristics, and include:

- Improving the gastronomic offer through the Slow Food Travel Region.
- Addressing issues of health and wellbeing through the Healing landscape of Lesachtal.
- Promoting sustainable, low impact mountaineering opportunities in the Mountaineering villages of Mauthen and Lesachtal.
- Giving value to natural areas and to soft mobility in the Weissensee Nature Park, Alpine Pearls Member.
- Purposefully reducing consumption and use of fossil fuels by incentivising renewable energy sources through the Certification as 5e-communities and the Climate and Energy Model Climate and energy model region to become "The most sustainable tourism region in Austria".
- Ensuring adherence to quality standards (process to achieve GSTC certification of the Nassfeld-Lesachtal-Weissensee tourism region; certification of accommodation companies based on Ecolabel and Ecohotels; Carinthia Quality Initiative, Accessibility Check quality criteria).

2.3. The tourism concept for the NLW destination

This chapter describes the tourism concept of the NLW destination. The tourism concept is defined by the following dimensions:

1. Organizational dimension: i.e., strategic functions and tasks of the NLW Tourismus and Marketing GmbH
2. Operational model: organizational chart
3. Forms of financing: the methods that ensure the implementation of the tourism development strategy
4. The tourist offer: the offer is comprised of the values of the local population, market demands and the tourism products
5. Promotion and marketing: coordinated image, logos and brands and promotional marketing actions.

2.3.1. Organisational dimension

The NLW Tourismus & Marketing GmbH¹¹ is the organization in charge of the three areas: Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee. NLW has an effective structure with involvement of **private, public sector and civil society**. The company members are the ten member municipalities with around 51% and Karnische Incoming GmbH (KIG) with around 49%. KIG consists of the voluntary merger of around 180 partner companies, from the areas of accommodation, infrastructure providers and leisure economy, as well as the cable car partners Nassfeld. This shareholder structure ensures that both the public sector and the private sector work together to develop and identify the strategic orientation and the implementation measures.

Representatives from all member organizations are present at every board meeting and at the General Assembly which meets once a year. An advisory board meeting with the responsible companies takes place regularly, about 2 times a year. The NLW Tourismus & Marketing GmbH works very closely with the individual tourist offices in the region. There are a **total of nine tourist offices**. As a shareholder of NLW, KIG is responsible for marketing and product development for the member enterprises.

The strategic functions and tasks of the NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH are the following and define the actions for the future:

1. Development and support for territorial projects;
2. Information and tourist reception;
3. Product development
4. Marketing and promo-commercialisation
5. Sustainable tourism

In order to implement the priority functions, the NLW Tourismus and Marketing GmbH is composed of an integrated system connecting private and public entities and equipped with specific structures. The action of NLW Tourismus and Marketing GmbH is oriented towards three main directions: the local community, the tourism system (consisting of the provincial structure, other destinations, research field and institutions) and the market (Figure 26).

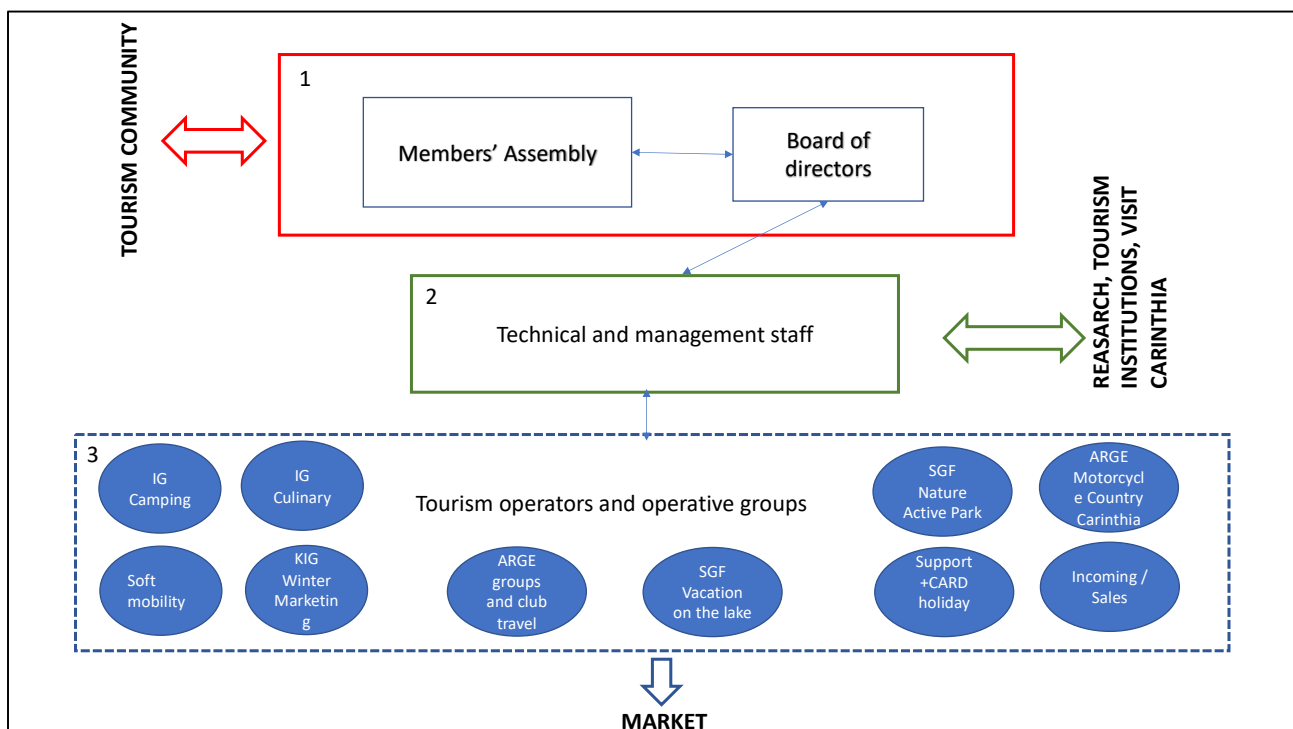


Figure 26. Summary of the NLW organisational structure

The first layer brings together the consultative and decision-making bodies, the shareholders and the board of directors of the NLW, a private society established and supported by public and private members. The work of the members is

¹¹ <https://www.nlw.at/en>

representative of the will and interests of the local community and entrepreneurs, while strategic choices activate the functioning of the other two parts.

As the “decision-making body”, the assembly brings the issues of the territory to the discussion table, acknowledges the strategic choices of the Board of Directors (BoD), votes the representatives of the BoD and approves planning and final budgets, and defines the multi-year strategies in addition to the objectives and priorities that the NLW must pursue. The board of directors is the decision-making subject, it agrees and decides in a climate of effective collaboration in favour of those actions that are functional to the tourism organization, and which respect the strategic functions approved by the assembly.

The second layer relates in a two-way with the world of research and tourism technology, interacting with national and local operational structures and interacting with technicians from other destinations. This layer comprises two parts: a managerial and an operational one. The first one is tasked with directing the destination strategy, using the tools of destination management and destination marketing in order to understand market dynamics, anticipate tourism challenges and propose issues and operational plans for local tourism to the Board of Directors. The management staff, on the other hand, takes care of the daily work related to reception, promotion, communication and marketing of the product.

The third layer results from the strategic decision of having identified 3 macro-areas in order to develop new products, carry out promotional activities and consequently align the tourist offer with what the area is able to offer. Different stakeholders have been identified and the intervention priorities defined together with them, in order to develop all the necessary promotional marketing actions. The NLW can thus count on the presence of numerous associations of operators in the area to facilitate network interconnection and create transversal products aimed at different types of customers.

In 2019-2020, NLW participated in the tender for the Climate and Energy Model under the leadership of the Climate and energy model regional Association. Each of the three areas has identified a strategic orientation.¹²

Nassfeld-Pressegger See:

- Sports and nature-oriented tourism (97% of the territory is undeveloped)
- Mountaineering Village Mauthen
- Geopark Carnic Alps and the "Carnic Milky Way" project
- Slow Food Travel destination
- Sustainable tourism and gentle mobility

Lesachtal:

- Nature-oriented health tourism ("Heilsame Landschaft Lesachtal")
- Slow Food Travel destination (Slow Food Presidi "Lesachtaler Brot")
- Mountaineering Village (no ski development, nature conservation, energy reduction)
- Sustainable tourism and gentle mobility

Weissensee:

- Nature park
- Pristine lake
- Sustainable tourism and gentle mobility

Overall, the NLW Tourismus and Marketing GmbH together with KEM Tourism identified a set of specific objectives:

1. Increase public transport share on arrival in the longer term to 7-10% (15% in Weissensee)
2. Increase the length of stay from 5 to 6 days
3. Increase the use of regional (organic) food
4. Integrate sustainability issues into the Destination Nassfeld-Pressegger See – Lesachtal - Weissensee brand through concrete product development and communication

¹² KEM report, Strategic orientation of holiday regions NLW (pg 73-75)

5. Raise awareness of sustainability/mobility and resource use among employees and operators in tourism

In order to further these objectives, 10 operative measures have been identified for the 2020-2023 period.

M 0 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

M 1 Energy characteristics and energy efficiency

M 2 Energy production/financing models

M 3 Waste prevention

M 4 Slow Food Travel Region – regional cuisine

M 5 Regional Market - Regional Shopping

M 6 Reduce car-free holidays / traffic

M 7 Back to Nature – Tourist Offers

M 8 Pleasure Tours

M 9 Sustainable region - here I go on holiday

M10 Communication Brand Sustainable Destination NLW

2.3.2. Operational model

In order to perform the tasks entrusted to NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH in the best possible way, the company is divided into the following division: a) Presidency and management with strategic and representative purposes, b) Marketing and commercialisation, c) Information and reception area for the management of the tourism offices and d) Administrative area.

The Organisation Chart of the NLW contains the list of employees of the NLW with the respective qualifications and areas of responsibility.¹³ In total, in 2020 the NLW employed 10 people permanently, and 1 contracted personnel from the University.

Table 8 shows the division of personnel with respect to functions:

Table 8. Employees of the NLW and respective roles

Management	
Head of Marketing	Christopher Gruber
Head of the Info & Servicecenter	Markus Brandstätter
Marketing and commercialisation	
Press & Public Relations & Social Media	Gerald Kroschel, MA, BA
B2B Customer Service Quality Management	Ulrike Burgstaller
Online-Marketing-Assistance	Ivonne Groinig, MA
Advertising Materials Media Contracts	Bettina Weber
Communication Brand-Management	Mag. (FH) Bernd Waldauer
Deskline-Administration Online-Management	Jan Hussmann
Commercial Administration Incoming + Sales, Group travelling	Karin Hohenwarter
Commercial Administration Controlling Business Corporation	Sonja Kucher
PR Press, Mobility, KEM	Christopher Puntigam
Information and reception offices	Tourisminformation Gitschtal Tourisminformation Kirchbach Tourisminformation Dellach Tourisminformation Kötschach-Mauthen Tourisminformation St. Stefan Tourisminformation Lesachtal Tourisminformation Weissensee Tourisminformation Stockenboi Tourisminformation Feistritz

¹³ <https://www.nlw.at/en/team>

The organigram shows the structures and hierarchy of NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH (Figure 27). Furthermore, the shareholders of the region are also listed.¹⁴

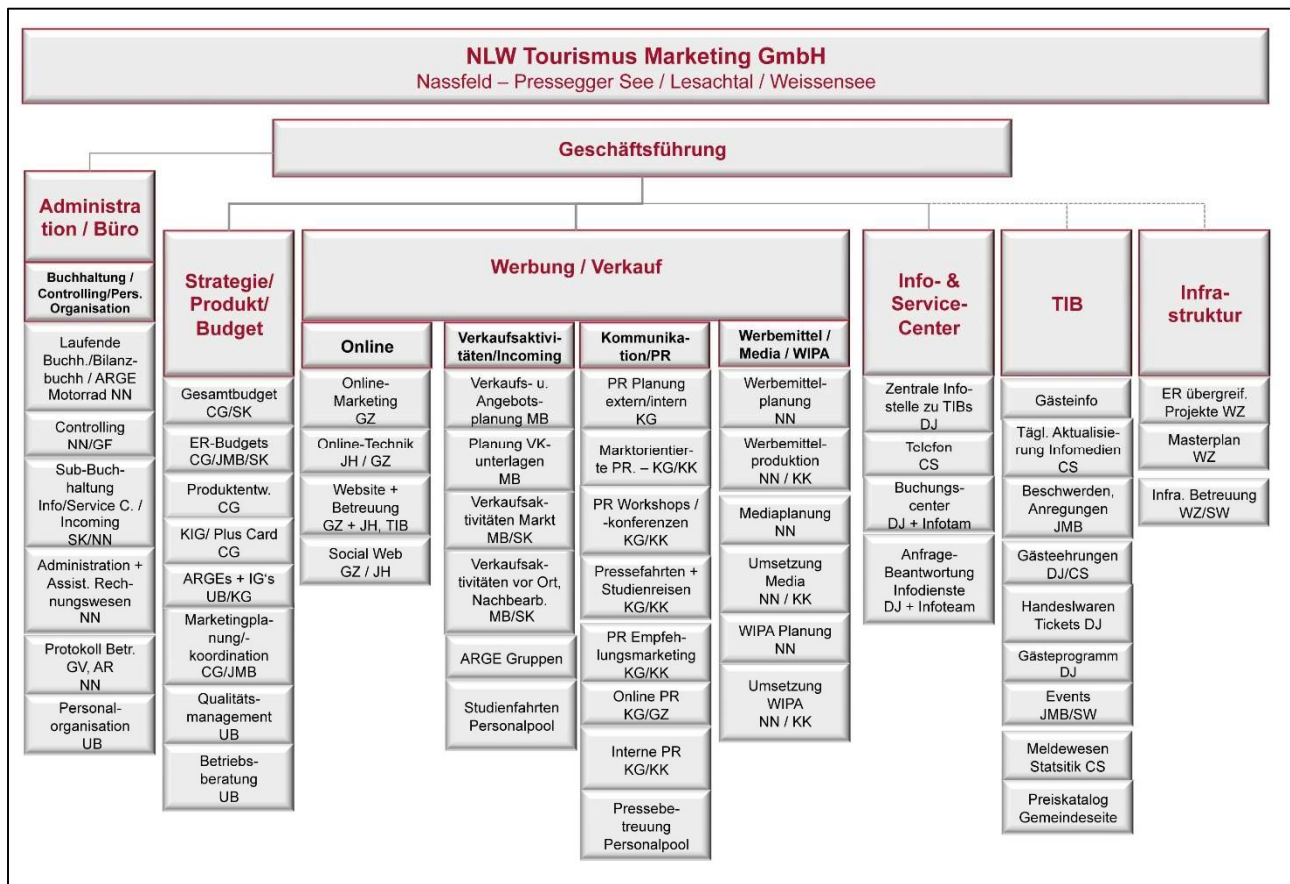


Figure 27. Organigram of the NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH

2.3.3. Forms of financing

In the Carinthian Tourism Law § 5 it is regulated that tourism companies like NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH are financially secured. The various entries of a tourism organization concern: public transfers, membership fees of private entrepreneurs, revenue items from services offered to tourists (tourist cards), and co-marketing actions with economic actors involved in specific projects.

2.3.4. Tourism offer

The "engine" of a destination is in the tourism product. The visitor today is attracted by the possibility of living experiences that bring together various resources of the destination. For this reason, the effort of strategic consultation is necessarily focused on the **tourism product**. On the one hand, a tourism product can be defined as a synthesis of services that ensure that the visitor experience is accessible and guaranteed. On the other hand, the product must be affordable, competitive, distinctive and possess charisma. A tourism product is charismatic when it is based on the values and skills shared by the community and the operators and when it can be transmitted to tourists and potential customers in a consistent and coherent way.

The **themes** of the destination emerge from its values. These **motivational families** make it possible to divide the market into segments and niches. Working on themes does not mean breaking up the offer and dispersing the strength of the destination, but it means increasing the quality of services, by operators who are willing to specialize to meet increasingly specific market demands.

Starting from the themes, the destination can build on existing and new tourism products, identifying a hierarchy of importance. The leading product guarantees attention and attractiveness, the complementary product gives added value to the holiday and the basic product represents the mass market offer of the tourist destination. Once the values, themes

¹⁴ Management and shareholders of the NLW: https://www.firmenabc.at/nlw-tourismus-marketing-gmbh_KRQx

and products have been clarified, it is possible to define the offers, or the actions functional to the distribution and sale of the product.

The profile of the Nassfeld-Pressegger See – Lesachtal – Weissensee destination is shown in Figure 28.

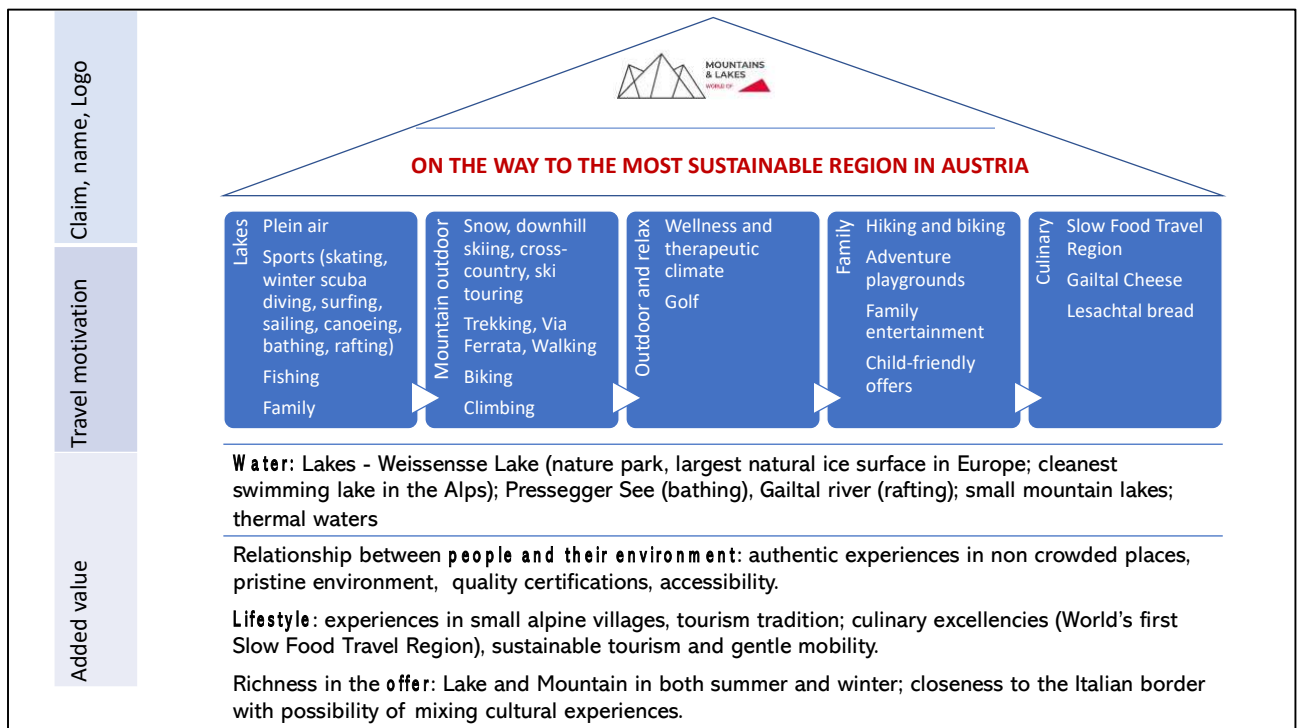


Figure 28. The profile of the Nassfeld-Pressegger See – Lesachtal – Weissensee destination

2.3.5 Marketing plan

Promo-marketing is a key activity for destination marketing. Planning marketing initiatives is complex due to changing tourist demands towards experiential dimensions as well as excess information, mainly through online channels.

Communication activities must follow the contents of the tourism concept previously expressed: brand values, coordinated image to promote the territory as a whole, respect the product hierarchy and identify motivational targets and reference markets.

3. Methodology

3.1. The GSTC standard

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council sustainability criteria and standards for the destination make it possible to define a starting point for moving towards sustainability, through the identification of impacts on social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions, and to initiate actions that allow to maximize the positive and minimize negative impacts.

Since the 1990, the United Nations, through the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), have been committed to the definition and monitoring of sustainable tourism indicators. Since 2010, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council has been working on the definition of a standard recognized and adopted internationally by both destinations and accommodation companies and tour operators. The certification for destinations was first launched in 2013 and was then revised, following an extensive international process with two rounds of stakeholder consultation, in 2019, when the second version of the standard was released. The GSTC Criteria were developed and revised to adhere as much as possible to the Standard-Setting Code of the ISEAL Alliance, the body recognized to provide guidance on international norms for developing sustainability standards in all sectors. Presently, three certification bodies have been accredited to apply the GSTC standard to destinations: EarthCheck, Green Destinations and Vireo srl.

To meet the definition of sustainable tourism, destinations must adopt an interdisciplinary, holistic and integrated approach that includes four main objectives: (i) sustainable management, (ii) socio-economic impacts, (iii) cultural impacts, and (iv) and environmental impacts. The indicators are seen to include the minimum that a destination should aspire to reach.

Each of the four sections is divided into criteria and the indicators correspond to each criterion (Table 9).

Table 9. Summary of the sections, criteria and indicators of the GSTC-D standard

Section	Criteria	Indicators
SECTION A: Sustainable management	11	51
SECTION B: Socio-economic sustainability	8	32
SECTION C: Cultural sustainability	7	26
SECTION D: Environmental sustainability	12	65
Total	38	174

3.2. The participatory process

Why use a participatory approach to prepare the GSTC certification? Participation is an essential operational methodology for the organization of sustainable tourism because it helps to stimulate common visioning, strategic engagement and the development of high quality local tourism products. During the participatory process, all stakeholders have the opportunity to express themselves, bringing their experience to support tourism initiatives that respond to the needs actually expressed by the area where they operate. Participation also empowers decision makers and participants themselves, helping to provide greater sustainability to the proposals that emerge during the meetings.

The NLW adopted three approaches to collect the evidence required to meet the criteria of the GSTC standard in a participatory way. First, bidding for phase two, the "Implementation Concept" of the Climate and Energy - Model Region Tourism, the NLW organised a series of five participatory processes which focused the strategic direction of the destination towards a climate neutral and energy efficient destination. Secondly, the University of Carinthia was engaged to help with the collection of the evidence for each indicator, with external support from Etifor and internal support in the NLW office. Thirdly, once the evidence had been collected, a second round of participatory meetings were organised with a dual purpose: on the one hand, to verify and collect additional information that could be adopted to meet the minimum requirements of the various GSTC indicators, and on the other hand to bring together operators to think about the comprehensive set of criteria related to sustainable tourism, which encompass not only environmental criteria, but also social and cultural ones. Considering participation as a process means that the focus is not simply on the results that it can

produce, but also on the relational dynamics that characterize a destination and create a more widespread and common awareness of what is sustainable tourism.

3.2.1. Participation and the GSTC

The architecture of the GSTC certification standard is divided into three levels: sections, criteria and indicators. The participatory workshops are conducted at the level of criteria, where indicators can be used to provide examples. Two workshops conducted with the stakeholders of the NLW Tourismus and Marketing GmbH were online due to the Covid sanitary emergency and held on November 19, 2020.

3.2.2. Stakeholder analysis

The participatory process was structured to allow the maximum possible participation by all stakeholders, both public and private. The NLW Tourismus and Marketing GmbH invited their members and stakeholders that had already participated in the development of the Climate and Energy Model report, distinguishing by sector of competence (public operators, tour operators, associations and representatives of the local community).

An invitation email was sent to all potential stakeholders, and some of them, deemed essential during the stakeholder analysis process, were also contacted by telephone in order to encourage their participation. The first workshop was organised in the morning with representatives of municipalities and tourism organisations from the Nassfeld-Presssegger See – Lesachtal – Weissensee region. In the afternoon, the workshop was conducted with participants from the tourism and cultural infrastructure companies. In total, 15 stakeholders participated in one of the two sessions.

3.2.3. Structure of the participatory process

Within a participatory process, communication is an integral part of the process if carried out in a conscious and structured manner, and for this reason particular importance was given to the communication of the process. In addition, each meeting with the stakeholders deliberately opened with a 20-minute frontal presentation in order to provide a common tourism technical language and to frame the certification process within a tourism strategy that aims to involve local communities and seeks to build an economic system which can benefit the destination as a whole.

Stakeholders were initially consulted by homogeneous categories through two focused meetings and a simple and standardized methodology was adopted. After an initial presentation of the GSTC standard by Etifor, translated from Italian into German, there was a participatory review of criteria with identification of gaps and best practices conducted entirely in German by a researcher from FH Carinthia, Thomas Zametter, with notes taken from the secretary of the NLW, Margret Lexer. The facilitator showed the sections ((i) sustainable management, (ii) socio-economic impacts, (iii) cultural impacts, and (iv) environmental impacts respectively, to enable participants to identify which criteria to focus their discussion on, based on their experience and interest. During the discussion, the facilitator used Mural app, a digital workshop supporting visual collaboration, to show participants the overall criteria and to zoom into each of them. Sticky notes were added to summarise the discussion around each criterion discussed. Because of the online format, the discussion did not cover all the criteria, but those on which there was more interest – either in showing gaps or best practices.

3.2.4. Instruments and techniques

The two meetings with homogeneous categories of stakeholders were conducted with a simple and standardized methodology to facilitate the comparison of results. At each meeting, the discussion in the two groups was led by a facilitator and supported by an expert on the topics of the table. The facilitator and the expert remained the same throughout the participatory process in order to ensure reliable and comparable results (Figure 29).

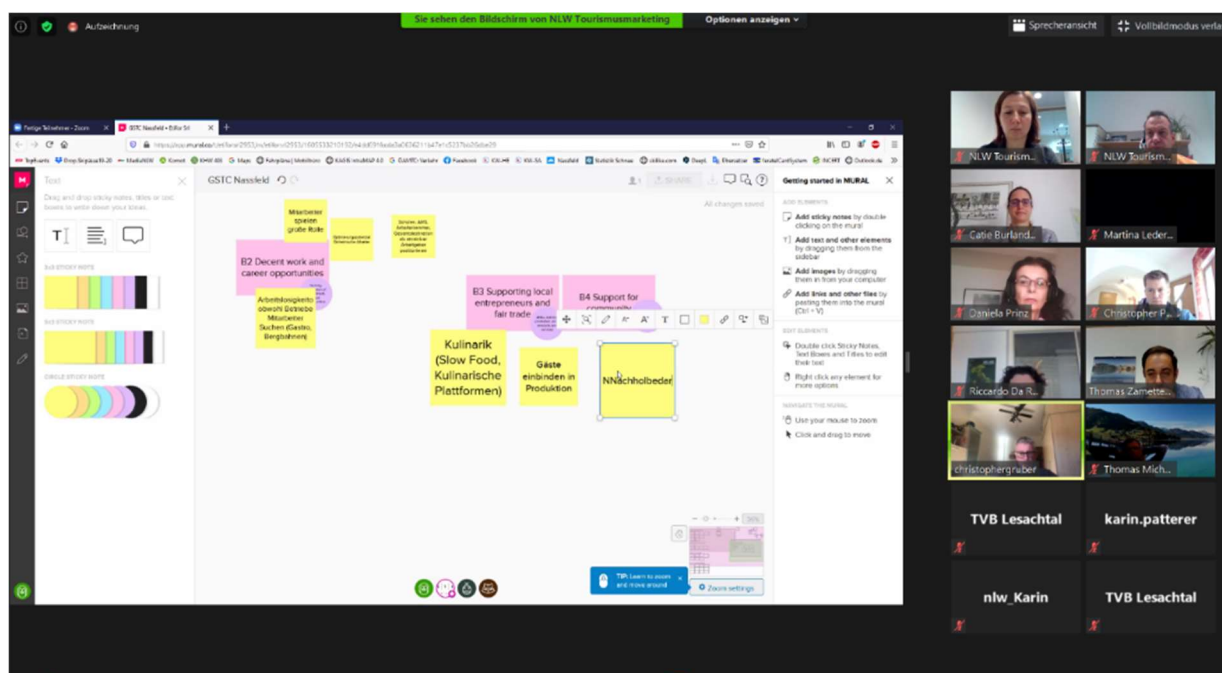





Figure 29. Screenshot from the workshop with representatives from municipalities and tourism organisations

After a quick introduction of the two sections on which the comparison would focus, the facilitator showed the criteria under discussion. The criteria, shown in different colours, could be moved within Mural with respect to a scale of "success", answering the question "Within a scale that varies from" very negative "to" very positive ", where would you position the NLW destination?" (Table 10).

Table 10. Categorisation of the criteria for the NLW destination

	These points are not yet or unsatisfactory in the region.
	These points have already been implemented in the region, but there is still potential to rise.
	These points are already very well implemented in the region and are satisfactory.

For each criterion, the participants had the opportunity to provide data and best practices, in the case of criteria positioned on the positive side of the scale, or to discuss any critical issues if the destination was considered lacking with respect to a certain criterion. The order of discussion of the criteria was left free in order to allow the group the opportunity to start with those most felt and known. Not all criteria therefore had to be discussed at every meeting.

During the second workshop private operators had an opportunity to evaluate the criteria already worked on by public municipalities, from the perspective of the hotels or accommodation provider and to discuss other criteria.

The data collected during the participatory process supported the completion of the certification database. In addition, the few "negative" criteria identified by the stakeholders were enriched with proposals and information on how to operate in order to improve the NLW destination – in particular, the issue of monitoring (A3) was added to the KEM proposal as a specific action for 2021.

4. Results

4.1. Results of the consultation

The preparation work for the audit and accreditation phase with respect to the GSTC certification system was carried out on two parallel tracks. A first phase of work involved the study of the scheme, criteria and related indicators in order to collect and systematize the data for demonstrating the organization and sustainable management of the NLW destination. A second phase of involvement of stakeholders who interact in different way with tourism was organised, with local administrators, operators of accommodation and tourist services.

In the first phase, the work was coordinated by the Project Manager of Etifor with the operational support of the University of Carinthia and the NLW staff. In the second phase, the technical staff took care of the participatory methodologies and techniques, leaving local operators to openly discuss the different aspects of the tourism strategy of territory. With the participatory activities, the aims were to inform and involve stakeholders in an active way, to collect information otherwise not available in the first phase of data collection, and to focus on the important role of residents and the community as first beneficiaries of the certification pathway being undertaken by the destination.

The two workshops were complementary and brought to light useful results not only for explaining the criteria and indicators of the GSTC scheme, but also for becoming aware of the real dimensions of the tourism phenomenon in the territory system of the NLW. It clearly emerged that the NLW destination is a well-organized destination and that issues related to the environment and the quality of life of residents have been among the priorities pursued for several years.

In the following section we present a summary of the results, comparing the discussion among the two workshops. A full report was prepared by the NLW.

4.1.1. Section A: Sustainable management

In the first workshop, municipalities and public operators observed that overall, the destination excels with regards to the management of the destination (A1 and A2) and that the Masterplan Tourism and the KEM dossier provide the appropriate tools for implementation. As a result, no further discussion was developed on this topic.

While no monitoring tool had been developed yet (A3), a series of questions for monitoring were identified. Representatives of municipalities and tourism organisations agreed that a monitoring tool would be developed with the KEM process with the discussion focusing on what to monitor, by whom and how. Regular monitoring was also identified as a task of the planned House of Sustainability. Private operators focused the discussion on how to increase the number of certified establishments, and how a number of different eco-labels could recognise companies that deal with the issue of sustainability and contribute to sustainability in the region.

Contact can be made with the region via Facebook¹⁵ and the website (contact form) (A5)¹⁶. For the future we have planned a questionnaire, which will be put online soon. The collected data will be used for Strategic Tourism Development. The goal is to involve the guest but also the local population more - this is what we mean by modern tourism development.

Participants agreed that the cooperation between the community and the DMO worked well and that the communication sent by the destination was appropriate. Public representatives agreed that a goal for the future would be in developing a more standardised approach to get resident feedback.

A discussion developed with both groups in terms of phenomenon of anti-tourism (A6). However, both groups agreed that while some residents are resistant to tourism, it is important to stress the idea that a lot of infrastructure (i.e., trails, bike routes) that are developed for visitors are also for residents.

The T-Mona guest (digital guest companion) is an app from the region of Carinthia. Through this app, the guest is accompanied from booking until after departure. The digital guest companion is being tested by 2 hotels. By June 2021, this app will be available free of charge for every business.

Manova is a ski resort survey that allows to receive feedback on a range of issues and develop positioning and strategy accordingly (A8). The latter provides feedback from 1.200 to 1.500 people every season. Both were seen as appropriate tools with future work also including questions on sustainability.

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/nassfeld>

¹⁶ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Unterkunft-finden/Anfragen-Prospektbestellung/>

In terms of risk and crises management, the official crisis plans at district headquarters level, state and municipal level were considered to be optimal but participants agreed that the destination could help provide concrete assistance to companies, much like it was the case during the most recent Covid sanitary emergency (A11).

Section A. Sustainable Management Criteria	-2	-1	0	1	2
A1. Destination management responsibility					+
A2. Destination management and action plan					+
A3. Monitoring and reporting	++				
A5. Resident engagement and feedback				+	
A6 Visitor engagement and feedback			+		
A8. Managing visitor volumes and activities				+	+
A11. Risk and crisis management					+

+ = representatives of municipalities and tourism organisations

+ = tourism and cultural infrastructure companies

4.1.2. Section B: Socio-economic sustainability

Overall both public and private representatives identified the challenge that despite unemployment, often the tourism operators found it difficult to find local staff and also depend on foreign workers (B2). Private operators stressed the importance of increasing benefits for new and local employees, branding the opportunities of working locally, offering exchanges with other companies. Positive feedback was also given with respect to the ways in which local entrepreneurs are supported (B3 and B4), and about flagship programs such as the Slow Food Travel region flagship. However, participants agree that they need to think more deeply about what sustainability means to the community and find ways to involve local companies in investments that promote sustainability. Also, work has been carried out to increase accessibility of people with a disability with positive examples in Weissensee for example (B8). In addition, some hotels such as Gartnerkofel have also employed a person with disabilities in the kitchen. Despite positive examples, both groups agreed that more could be done to increase accessibility but also social inclusion.

Section B. Socio-economic sustainability Criteria	-2	-1	0	1	2
B2. Decent work and career opportunities			++		
B3. Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade				++	
B4. Support for community				++	
B8. Access for all			++		

+ = representatives of municipalities and tourism organisations

+ = tourism and cultural infrastructure companies

4.1.3. Section C: Cultural sustainability

Culture and tourism complement each other, and participants identified very positive examples of the destination promoting its cultural heritage, and hotels promoting local culture to their guests. However, overall the perspective was somewhat ambivalent: representatives agreed that while events are an important part of the attractiveness of the area and a way to promote their culture, the primary focus should be on how to ensure that the community stays alive. On the one hand, many traditional ways of life (i.e., farming in mountain areas) have been side-lined by new opportunities in the tourism sector, but on the other, tourism has also enabled to go back to the production of own local products and to maintain local customs and traditions. It also seems that Covid emergency spurred increased value being given to regional products.

Section C: Cultural sustainability Criteria	-2	-1	0	1	2
C1. Protection of cultural assets			++		
C2. Cultural artefacts			++		
C3 Intangible heritage			++		

+ = representatives of municipalities and tourism organisations

+ = tourism and cultural infrastructure companies

4.1.4. Section D: Environmental sustainability

According to public institutions, the balancing act is between natural areas that are protected but have a high flow of visitors, such as Weissensee (D2). Participants recognise that nature conservation is implemented as one of the four pillars of nature conservation management, yet sometimes the interests of tourism are opposed. Overall, tourism needs to be actively managed so that biodiversity values can be maintained (D2). For example, Lesachtal did not face the difficult challenge of managing visitor flow, because of overall low pressure. Conversely, high-frequency areas face a higher challenge.

In terms of interaction with wildlife (D3), areas of conflict were identified between hunters and cyclists, in terms of responsibility with regards protecting wildlife in their area. Ski tourers scare wild animals and this can lead to death in winter. On the other hand, these conflicts did not seem to be present with regards to hikers, who are well accustomed to rules of interaction. Private operators also recognised that given clear rules, in terms of timing and in terms of places where it was possible to bike, then positive relations could be developed. These rules also needed to be clearly shared across the border with Italy.

While there was general agreement on criteria D2, D3 and D4, private operators also provided their feedback in relation to criteria D5, D10, D11 and D12. These criteria are well addressed in the KEM proposal, with efforts dedicated to reducing energy consumption from tourism and reducing tourist private traffic. While points were rated positively, the private operators also suggested areas for improvement. For example, in terms of mobility (D11), e-bikes were considered important for visitors, but more needed to be done in terms of providing charging stations. Conversely, electric cars tended to consume more on the hills and where this limitation was seen to require special consideration. In terms of buses, suggestions were made for smaller buses on certain routes.

Waste was also considered important, both in terms of collection along the bike paths and originating from the bikes themselves, which produce hazardous waste, which should be reused and recycled as much as possible. However, the Waste Water and Waste Management Association was seen to work well and in a structured way.

Section D: Environmental sustainability Criteria	-2	-1	0	1	2
D2. Visitor management at natural sites		++			
D3. Wildlife interaction			++		
D4. Species exploitation and animal welfare			++		
D D5. Energy conservation				+	
D10. GHG emissions and climate change mitigation				+	
D11. Low-impact transportation				+	
D12. Light and noise pollution				+	

+ = representatives of municipalities and tourism organisations

+ = tourism and cultural infrastructure companies

4.1.5. Overall results from the consultation workshops

The overall results of both workshops are shown in Figure 30.



Figure 30. Results of two workshop consultations with public authorities (in yellow sticky notes) and private operators (blue sticky notes)

Some conclusions emerged for the definition of the strategic development of the NLW destination:

- Operators are aware of the degree of efficiency achieved by the local tourism system with respect to many criteria of sustainable tourism, results that were also possible thanks to supporting policy and legislation at the national and regional level;
- The tourism organization of the destination is consistent with internationally recognized operating models;
- Tourism is a social phenomenon, perceived as an important resource for supporting the development of the communities in the destinations;
- Tourism is also part of the economic system and derives its potential from integration with all the sectors in the community;
- The role of the local community is considered as central to tourism development and social sustainability, the ultimate goal of tourism
- A global vision of the phenomenon emerged from an environmental, cultural and social point of view.

The tourist areas demonstrate a need for:

- A monitoring system that can account for the direct and indirect impacts of tourism

- Internal marketing and communication to addressing some issues, i.e., conflicts among different users, the role of tourism in the area

The analysis of all indicators is shown in the following section (4.2).

4.2. Results of the collection of evidence for the GSTC indicators

The results are reported in this section, grouped by criteria. The references used to justify all the GSTC indicators are associated with each criterion. The specific references are found in Annex 1 and include the following sections:

- n. criterion
- criterion title
- n. indicator
- indicator description
- Document
- Summary of the document
- Subject responsible for the information
- Accessibility of the document (yes / no)
- Collected in a participatory way (yes / no)
- Year of publication
- Duration / Validity
- Website
- Presence / Proposal of a numerical indicator

4.2.1. GSTC-D Section A - Sustainable Management

A1 Destination management responsibility: The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector, public sector and civil society. This group has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of socio- economic, cultural and environmental issues. The group is adequately funded, works with a range of bodies in delivering destination management, has access to sufficient staffing (including personnel with experience in sustainability) and follows principles of sustainability and transparency in its operations and transactions.

As described in section 2.3.1, the NLW Tourismus and Marketing GmbH¹⁷ is the organization in charge of the three areas: Nassfeld-Presssegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee. NLW has an effective structure with involvement of private, public sector and civil society (**A1a**). The organigram shows the structures and hierarchy of NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH. Furthermore, the website of the company ABC shows the management structure of the NLW and presents a list of shareholders with the percentage¹⁸. In the Carinthian Tourism Law § 5 it is regulated that tourism companies like NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH are financially secured. As examples, the budgets Summer 2017 I Winter 2017/2018 and Summer 2020 I 2020/2021 were filed (see section above, **A1b**).

Representatives from all member organizations are present at every board meeting and at the General Assembly which meets once a year. The KIG is a shareholder of NLW responsible for marketing and product development for the member enterprises. An advisory board meeting with the responsible companies takes place regularly, about 2 times a year (**A1c**). The NLW Tourismus & Marketing GmbH works very closely with the individual tourist offices in the region. There are a **total of nine tourist offices**. The Organisation Chart of the NLW contains the list of employees of the NLW with the respective qualifications and areas of responsibility.¹⁹ As an example for a tourism office the Info- und Servicecenter Nassfeld-Presssegger See was listed. In total, in 2020 the NLW employs 10 people permanently, and 1 contracted personnel from the University (**A1d**).

The destination has implemented several processes which support sustainability principles and transparency in operations and letting of contracts (**A1e**). At the destination level, since 2015, NLW has supported the implementation of the Slow Food Travel (Box 1).²⁰ In 2020, a new plan has been developed to support the implementation of the climate and energy model region in the Climate and energy model region. Initiatives in the area of sustainable mobility and environmentally friendly cable cars and ski lifts are already being showcased and will be geared at decreasing use of private cars.²¹

¹⁷ <https://www.nlw.at/en>

¹⁸ https://www.firmenabc.at/nlw-tourismus-marketing-gmbh_KRQx

¹⁹ <https://www.nlw.at/en/team>

²⁰ http://www.slowfood.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Manifesto_Quality_ENG.pdf

²¹ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Nassfeld-A-Z/Nachhaltigkeit/>

Box 1. Best Practice: Slow Food Travel (A1e)

Slow Food Travel is a Slow Food project to develop and promote a travel experience that is in line with the Slow Food philosophy. The association Gut.Sauber.Fair.-Kärnten was Founded in 2018 on the initiative of Kärnten Werbung (Carinthia Promotion). It is an association of Slow Food convivia in Carinthia, including: Kärnten Werbung, Genussland Kärnten, the Professional Gastronomy Group, the Agricultural Schools, the Association of Bread Craftsmen and the Slow Food Travel Alpe Adria Carinthia consortium. Membership can be acquired by applying to the association Gut.Sauber.Fair.-Kärnten. The association is supported by the Agricultural Department and the Tourism Department of the province of Carinthia.

A2 Destination management strategy and action plan: The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination management strategy and action plan that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, was developed with stakeholder engagement and is based on sustainability principles. The strategy includes an identification and assessment of tourism assets and considers socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and risks. The strategy relates to and influences wider sustainable development policy and action in the destination.

In 2015, the Tourism Master Plan for the strategic and structural tourism development of the cross-border destination Nassfeld-Pressegger See and Pramollo / Pontebba was presented in the framework of the Interreg project No. 4915 – TN/P "Tourism cooperation in the Nassfeld/Pramollo area". The "Tourist Winter and Summer Strategy" was realized with the assistance and moderation of the tourism consulting company MANOVA GmbH as well as the "Conos Management Consulting" for the destination Nassfeld-Pressegger See. Product development and marketing are currently based on this, they are periodically evaluated and thus are up-to-date basis.

In 2019, the destination Nassfeld-Pressegger See – Lesachtal – Weissensee (NLW) participated in the first call for tenders for the project "Most Sustainable Tourism Region" and brought together public legal institutions and private companies to evaluate existing projects and measures and to find new ones that would make it possible to establish the destination as an internationally relevant flagship destination for climate-friendly tourism. The call was renewed in 2020 and following a series of ten workshops (Figure 31), the Climate and energy model region Municipal Association submitted a new proposal to "the most sustainable region in Austria" (**A2c**). The Implementation Concept for Climate and Energy - Model Region Tourism for Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee was completed in September 2020.

Workshops Tourism Region Hermagor – Project: Sustainable Tourism Region

22.7.2020 – Thomas Zametter – FH-Villach

Subject / Workshop	Date	Aims
Mobility	Thursday, 23.7. 2020 – 9:00-11:30	car-free vacation reduce car traffic car sharing
Energy efficiency and production	Tuesday, 28.7.2020 – 14:00-17:30	Energy characteristics and energy efficiency Financing models and energy production
Waste management and waste prevention	Tuesday, 4.8.2020 - 9:00-12:00	The region for less waste Clean ecologically Green Events
Regional Ressources	Thursday; 13.8.2020 - 14:00-17:00	Slow-Food-Travel Region (regional cuisine) Regional market and regional shopping
Tourist offers	Thursday; 20.8.2020 - 9:00-12:00	Awareness raising (back to nature) Sustainable region - I'm on vacation here! Destination closes to nature should be bundled under this motto.

Figure 31. Summary of KEM workshops (2020)

The KlimaEnergieModelregion (KEM) Masterplan is a published document setting out the current destination strategy and action for 2021-2024 in Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee (**A2a**).²² KEM Masterplan ensures that the destination can move concretely on a sustainable path. The plan calls for sustainability and resilient climate-neutral measures in its vision (p. 3), it includes an analysis of the points of strength and weakness of the destination (p. 35-36)

²² <https://www.nassfeld.at/PDFs/KEM%20-%20ENG.pdf>

and sets out an action plan with ten targeted measures which include reference to sustainability targets (from p. 88) (A2e). One of the most important risks identified is demographic decline (p. 8-10) (A2d).

In addition, in 2019, the Government of Austria published a nine year strategy for developing tourism in the country.²³ In a broad participation process with experts, entrepreneurs from the tourism industry, but also representatives from other industries, the "Plan T - Master Plan for Tourism" was drawn up. The core of the one-year strategy process was based on nine workshops from October 2018 to January 2019 with more than 500 participants across Austria. It sets the ground for the sustainable development of Austria as a tourist location and is intended to be a guideline for political decisions at all levels as well as for the programming of EU funds for the coming period in Austria. This master plan is supplemented by an annual action plan, which contains specific implementation steps and makes it possible to react quickly to changes in this dynamic environment. Among all identified actions, the Action Plan for 2019-2020 aims to reinforce tourism destinations as climate and energy model regions and promote Austrian eco-label in tourism (A2d).

A3 Monitoring and reporting: The destination is implementing a system to monitor and respond to socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and impacts arising from tourism. Actions and outcomes are regularly monitored, evaluated and publicly reported. The monitoring system is periodically reviewed.

The Carinthian Economic Development Fund looks after and accompanies companies and institutions in the Carinthian economy to increase their competitiveness and that of the country.²⁴ The Carinthian Economic Development Fund deals with various aspects of economic development and collect statistical information in the region (A3a-b).

A number of specific quantifiable socio-economic, cultural and environmental indicators are already collected by the destination but more needs to be done. For this reason, the KEM Masterplan has identified a set of indicators it will monitor to ensure that the targets for each of the ten measures and established for 2023 are achieved.

For example, the destination keeps track of tourism statistics, including arrival, overnight stays and provenance of the visitors). In addition to this, the destination uses the +CARD holiday, which enables guests to use a large part of the activity program free of charge in summer as well as the Mountain railroads. Some services are maintained by the Nassfeld-Pressegger See Information and Service Center, others are maintained directly from the provider. This means that statistics on the use of the services can also be retrieved from the booking system and a scan of the cards.

One example is that the sum of the hikes is published annually in the annual report. The other inclusive services are only statistically processed since summer 2020. Due to COVID-19, no annual report was prepared in 2019. The annual report of 2020 will only be prepared at the end of the year. Therefore, the annual report of 2018 is available as an example. A statistic of the guided hikes from 2020 is also enclosed (A3b-c).

In order to be able to market the habitat Nassfeld-Pressegger See as all-year vacation destination in the year 2020 for the first time the summer program was extended up to 26.10.

Box 2. Best practice – Evaluation of the Weissensee Nature Park Plan 2020

In the Weissensee, both the creation of the "Nature Park Plan 2020"²⁵ and its implementation can be regarded as an important milestone in the development of Carinthia's nature park. In the measures described in the following, the traffic light principle is chosen for the implementation status:

- red: not implemented or not yet implemented
- orange: adapted or partially implemented
- green: most or all of it implemented"

A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards: The destination regularly informs tourism-related enterprises about sustainability issues and encourages and supports them in making their operations more sustainable. The destination promotes the adoption of sustainability standards, promoting the application of GSTC-I Recognized

²³ https://www.bmlrt.gv.at/tourismus/masterplan_tourismus.html

²⁴ <https://kwf.at/>

²⁵ <https://www.Weissensee.com/andsrv/server.and?a=File&i=580&h=9e45770aa72388595d7b910d6b37015e5afc7515&e=.pdf>

standards and GSTC-I Accredited certification schemes for tourism enterprises, where available. The destination publicizes a list of sustainability certified enterprises.

The DMO regularly sends out information to the enterprises of the destination (**A4a**). For example, in the summer, the summer sports report is sent out three times a week. In this report opening hours, events and tips are sent out to all landlords and passed on to the guests. Sustainability issues such as bicycle buses, walking buses, Slow Food Travel are also regularly included in this report. In the summer of 2020, a total of 60 newsletters were sent detailing information on: weather, events, and programmes. In addition, in summer and winter, the landlord information is sent out once a week. In 2020, a total of 31 newsletters were sent out. This report includes opening hours, changes in the program or for example current roadblocks. In addition, annually updated information material is made available to both landlords and guests, including mobility in the region, bike-buses, alpine shuttles, slow food travel brochures.

In the destination there are different certifications. Accommodation in hotels with the Austrian Ecolabel means high environmental and service quality: food from regional suppliers as well as responsible use of water and energy.²⁶ Environmentally friendly hotels with the Austrian Ecolabel are located in the GreenHotelspage. The Ecolabel certification is provided to tourism offers, hotels and private accommodation, gastronomy, catering, museums, green locations for green meetings and green events, communal catering, alpine huts and camping sites.

In the KEM Masterplan there is a list of initiatives, companies and tourist businesses that show adherence to sustainability principles. For example, many companies source electricity from family-owned companies such as AlpenAdriaEnergie GmbH. This company offers electricity from the Austrian eco-electricity pioneer and has numerous certificates and awards.²⁷ Some tourism companies have been awarded different sustainability certificates.²⁸ Six hotels are certified Ecolabel, one hotel is certified as EcoHotel and other businesses comply to standards such as Austria's 1st hybrid liner ship with "MS Alpenperle".

A5. Resident engagement and feedback: The destination enables and promotes public participation in sustainable destination planning and management. Local communities' aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with tourism sustainability and destination management are regularly monitored and publicly reported, and action is taken in response to them. The destination has a system to enhance local understanding of sustainable tourism opportunities and challenges and to build the capacity of communities to respond.

The destination ensures the participation of the local residents and businesses in their planning (**A6a-b**). For the writing of the Implementation concept for the climate and energy model region tourism Nassfeld-Presssegger See - Lesachtal – Weissensee, ten workshops on sustainable topics were held between January and August 2020, with the latter five developing more specifically five different themes. A total of 75 people participated.

A short online survey of residents and other systematic feedback mechanisms, covering tourism issues, has only recently been developed and will be implemented over the course of 2021 (A5c). The destination regularly responds to residents' feedback by using tools such as facebook. The destination organises seminars on an ongoing basis to support further education and training geared at both organizations and local residents. The training also includes topics on sustainability (A5e).²⁹ For example, the Slow Food Travel's offer is not only for guests, but also used to show residents how regional products are made and what are the qualities of our region.³⁰

In the course of the Interreg Italia-Austria MADE (Malga and Alm Desired Experiences) project, three gastronomic events with star cast took place in the summer of 2019 in selected alpine huts of the Italian and Austrian territory. During the events, the star chefs from Italy and Slovenia created dishes using products from their respective alpine pastures and presented them at a special "show cooking". Both Italian and Austrian residents participated in these events.

As Box 3 shows, also local associations such as Energie:Autark support awareness raising and training on topics of sustainability in the region.

Box 3. Best practice: Energie:autark Learning garden

²⁶ <https://www.umweltzeichen.at/en/tourism/hotels>

²⁷ <https://aae.at/>

²⁸ www.umweltzeichen.at and <https://gralhof.at/bio-and-sustainability/sustainability>

²⁹ <https://www.nassfeld.at/de/vermieterservice/Weiterbildungen/#/erlebnisse>

³⁰ <https://www.slowfood.travel/en>

The association Energie:autark is involved in the community and in the region in the direction of awareness-raising/training and informs about current subsidies for new construction, renovation, conversion and use of heating systems from renewable energy sources as well as electric mobility. Currently, members of the association are also actively involved in the implementation concept of KEM Tourism. The association Energie:autark organizes information events about sustainability. For example, in collaboration with the University of Education Carinthia, Climate Alliance Carinthia and Asteenergy, engineering office for renewable energies, as well as the elementary and secondary school Kötschach-Mauthen, small, age- and topic-related experiments and large, specially made demonstration experiments bring visitors closer to the topics of water, wind and solar power as well as biomass and energy saving. The learning garden focuses on discovering and action-oriented learning and is primarily intended to promote extracurricular learning for all age groups.³¹

A6. Visitor engagement and feedback: The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction with the quality and sustainability of the destination experience and, if necessary, to take action in response. Visitors are informed about sustainability issues in the destination and the part that they can play in addressing them.

Extensive preparatory work and strategic processes preceded the development of the Tourism Master Plan 2025, including guest surveys and strategy workshops (**A6a**). Multi-year guest surveys and Customer satisfaction analyses (winter and summer) carried out until 2014 showed the strengths and weaknesses, purchasing reasons and positioning dimensions of the destination. For example, guest surveys showed that the townscape, the atmosphere, but also the general cleanliness and safety needed improvement (p. 39), tourists need to be better managed and informed, the transparency of the experience and the optimisation of the range of public transport products could also be improved (p. 40). This feedback has been taken up over the years and also in the new KEM Master Plan.

In winter 2015-2016, a Manova ski area survey was conducted at Nassfeld. The survey collected information on the following points: Customer structure, visit decision, satisfaction, image and summary. The topic of sustainability was not covered in this survey. In 2020, the destination prepared a survey which will be reviewed regularly to address different and emerging issues arising from tourism impacts (**A6b**). The survey is available online from the website of the World of Mountains and Lakes. Specifically, questions on sustainability address 4. In addition, feedback is regularly collected from visitors using social media such as Facebook.

Finally, some of the hotels conduct their own surveys. For example, the Hotel Gartnerkofel in Nassfeld offers guests a guest evaluation. The hotel is one of the most popular hotels worldwide in 2019, and only the best 10 hotels in a region receive the HolidayCheck Award.³² The Almwelness-Resort Tuffbad offers guests a guest rating. The Almwelness-Resort Tuffbad is a partner of the Top-Alpine-Wellness-Hotels Austria and the Health & Spa Premium Hotels.³³

Thanks to the Interreg Italia-Austria project "World of Mountains", the destination was able to embark on a process to certify the destination for its commitment to sustainability. The GSTC certification process is the result of an action taken in response to visitor feedback findings (**A6c**).

In addition, the association "energie:autark Kötschach-Mauthen" ensures that all renewable energy production plants can be visited in a fun way. The "Energy Experience Tours" can be booked on request and by appointment with groups of 10 or more people.³⁴

A7. Promotion and information: Promotion and visitor information material about the destination is accurate with regard to its products, services, and sustainability claims. Marketing messages and other communications reflect the destination's values and approach to sustainability and treat local communities and natural and cultural assets with respect.

The World of Mountains and Lakes website has been recently updated to include all relevant information for visitors but also residents and tourist operators (**A7a**). Sustainability plays an important role in the communication, and through innovative concepts in terms of mobility, regional production and supply, and power supply, the Nassfeld-Presssegger See

³¹ <https://energie-autark.at>

³² <https://www.gartnerkofel.at/hotel-nassfeld/gaestebewertungen>

³³ <https://www.almwelness.com/de/welnesshotel-kaernten-bewertungen/>

³⁴ https://energie-autark.at/show_content.php?sid=82

– Lesachtal – Weissensee region is constantly working on this important topic. The destination also invites visitors to visit the Carinthian mountains because of its low ecological footprint.³⁵

In addition, annually updated information material is made available to both tourism operators and guests. Examples include: mobility in the region, cycle buses, alpine shuttles, slow food travel brochures. The information brochures adequately reflect the destination. All information is checked with the relevant providers before being published and shared, i.e., with the bus/train company, with the museums, with local guides and other local providers (A7b).

In the region Nassfeld-Preseggger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee there are more than 80 bike routes at all levels of difficulty for both guests and locals. All tours can be found in the interactive tour guide and in the 2019 newly created bike map. The tours are constantly updated and maintained.³⁶

A8. Managing visitor volumes and activities: The destination has a system for visitor management which is regularly reviewed. Action is taken to monitor and manage the volume and activities of visitors, and to reduce or increase them as necessary at certain times and in certain locations, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultural heritage and environment.

The destination management strategy and action plan address seasonality and spread of visitation (**A8a**). The destination has two-season, which is a valuable prerequisite for further development into a year-round destination. The existing Tourism Strategy 2025 for the destination Nassfeld-Preseggger See addresses both winter and summer seasons and concrete implementation-oriented measures for the development of sustainable, cross-border year-round tourism are included. For example, the "Nature Experience" with a focus on Nature and landscape is designed to ensure year-round or seasonal leisure activities. In addition, alpine huts and cabins are open year-round in the Carnic Alps (see 4.4.2, pg. 64).

To monitor visitors, every month an employee of the municipality of Hermagor compiles the number of overnight stays in Hermagor in a statistic (A8b). This is sent to a distribution list for information on development. The annual report also shows the overnight stay statistics for summer and winter. Additionally there is also a 10-year comparison. Due to COVID-19, no annual report was prepared in 2019. The annual report of 2020 will only be prepared at the end of the year.

The actions taken to decrease impact of visitors are described in the Tourism Masterplan, page 29 Market analysis and trends, pages 35-36 Measures and targets - operational implementation of the strategy (winter), page 49 Measures Basic requirements - Operational implementation of the strategy (summer).

One of the negative impacts of tourism in the region is given by use of private cars (**A8c**). For this reason, the destination has implemented projects such as Fred Car Sharing (also in Box 12 below).³⁷ In addition, measures for increasing car-free travel, reducing traffic reduction and providing pleasure tours were developed in July 2020 together with local stakeholders as part of the Climate and Energy Model Region.

The NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH is the marketing service provider for the adventure areas Nassfeld-Preseggger See (Gailtal & Gitschtal), Lesachtal and Weissensee. NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH markets Nassfeld as Austria's TOP-10 ski area, cross-border mountain-lake offers in Austria and Italy, the world's first Slow Food Travel destination and the nature-oriented Lesachtal and Weissensee adventure areas. For each of the three habitats, a marketing strategy was created and developed to ensure a balanced development. Box 4 shows the example of Lesachtal, an area that has won many awards for its natural assets and which has recently reoriented itself to focus even more on the environment and health.

Box 4. Lesachtal Best practice: from Landscape of the Year award to the Mountaineering village nomination (A8e)

"The Lesachtal was named by journalists in 1995 as ""Europe's most natural holiday destination"" and as ""Landscape of the Year"" and an example of a sustainable tourism for the Alpine region awarded by the Friends of Nature International. In 2019, a strategic reorientation of the Lesachtal habitat was initiated by the municipality and the association Development Initiative Lesachtal (EIL) with the project ""Heilsame Landschaft Lesachtal"", to focus even more on the environment and health, both for the population and for the guests. Several concrete ideas have already

³⁵ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Nassfeld-A-Z/Nachhaltigkeit/>

³⁶ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Summer-World/Bike-World/Tourenguide/>

³⁷ <https://fred-fahren.at/ecarsharing/>

emerged within the framework of this project: to highlight the quality criteria for products and tourist offers (also in accordance with the Slow Food Travel criteria); energy self-sufficient community and sustainable construction. Two health conferences took place in 2018 and 2019. The submission and nomination for the 2021 Building Culture Prize can also be seen as a concrete result. An essential aspect of the nomination is the preservation of the historical buildings. The municipality of Lesachtal is also a founding member of the mountaineering villages and Slow Food Travel Region. Furthermore, the community is involved in the initiative ""4 municipalities, 1 habitat"" - a cross-border cooperation of the Carinthian and East Tyrolean communities of the Lesachtal. (described in the KEM report, p. 29).

A9. Planning regulations and development control: The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies which control the location and nature of development, require environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. Regulations also apply to operations, including property rental and concessions for tourism purposes. The guidelines, regulations and policies were created with public participation and are widely communicated and enforced.

The Carinthian Municipal Planning Act 1995 - K-GplG 1995 legislation, version of 20.10.2020 contains, among other things, the topics of zoning plan §1, local development concept §2, development plan §24.³⁸ It also provides indications on environmental impact assessment (**A9b**). Every community in the district of Hermagor has a local development concept (**A9a**). This is developed every 6-7 years by the local council through land management (see the local development concept of the municipality of Hermagor-Presegger See from 2014). In Austria there is no citizen participation in the development of laws. However, the law for Carinthian general municipal regulations states that every Austrian has the right to participate in meetings of the municipal council (**A9d**).³⁹ Any regulation or amendment to a regulation must be made public by law. Only then is this regulation legally effective. All regulations are found online.⁴⁰

A10. Climate change adaptation: The destination identifies risks and opportunities associated with climate change. Climate change adaptation strategies are pursued for the siting, design, development and management of tourism facilities. Information on predicted climate change, associated risks and future conditions is provided for residents, businesses and visitors.

The destination management strategy and action plan identify and address climate issues. The Tourism Master Plan (2015) defines strategies and goals and includes a section on "Climate protection in tourism" (**A10a**). Various projects and initiatives have been in place at the regional and municipal level for several years.⁴¹ The participation in the Climate and Energy Model region for tourism destinations was a welcome opportunity to further intensify the sustainable orientation of destination development and to focus on climate-relevant offers and focus on measures. As part of the KEM implementation concept, measures were defined and described in detail including for climate protection.

Some **companies** in the region are also leading in the field of sustainability, climate action and energy. These include: Hermagor Municipal Association, Destination Nassfeld-Lesachtal-Weissensee, First Slow Food Travel Region, LEADER Region Hermagor, KEM Climate and energy model region. **Community initiatives** such as: ÖEK's - Local Development Concepts, 5e communities, Climate Alliance Communities, Energy model community Kötschach-Mauthen, Mountaineering villages Mauthen and Lesachtal, Nature Park municipality Weissensee, Sustainable municipality of Lesachtal also address the topic of sustainability and climate action. The communities of Kötschach-Mauthen and Weissensee are among the top communities in Austria with an "e5" award, which is the highest award in the program.

In addition, there are positive examples of tourist buildings that directly address climate change (**A10b**). For example, the climate alliance Betrieb Hotel Kürschner has energetically renovated the Slim-Schlemmer-Hotel Kürschner building. The Biohotel Gralhof Weissensee has been carefully modernised to a 4 star level and certified as an organic hotel. The hotel has a clear sustainable strategy and markets itself as the only climate-neutral tourism company. Climate neutrality at the Gralhof means that the CO2 footprint of the hotel's business, including food and drink, is 43 tonnes of CO2 equivalents per year. Through the purchase of 86 climate protection certificates, the hotel has offset the emissions of the hotel and restaurant business for 2020 and 2021.

³⁸ Carinthian community planning law:

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=10000193>

³⁹ Right to participate Local Council Meeting: AGO §36.

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=10000276>

⁴⁰ Digital office board of the municipality Hermagor-Presegger See: <https://www.hermagor.at/rathaus/amtstafel/>

⁴¹ KEM Masterplan, p. 25-32: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Nassfeld-A-Z/Nachhaltigkeit/>

Weissensee is an important part of the Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee region both in summer and winter. Especially in winter, Weissensee is an important tourism attraction. Due to climate change, difficulties could arise in the future preventing lake freezing. A workshop on climate change adaptation was held in the community of Weissensee on the 23.06.2019 to discuss effects and scenarios for Austria (A10c).

The "Climate and Energy Model Region Carnic Energy" is a successful initiative of the Climate and Energy Fund and the Ministry of Life. 91 Austrian regions are supported in making optimal use of their local renewable energy resources and in anchoring the climate policy objectives of the federal government at regional and local level (A10d).⁴² In addition, the municipalities which are involved in the climate alliance: Municipality of Hermagor-Pressegger See, Kötschach-Mauthen and the Municipality of Feistritz/Gail actively promote climate awareness and action (A10e).

A11. Risk and crisis management: The destination has a risk reduction, crisis management and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. Procedures and resources are established for implementing the plan and it is regularly updated.

The municipality of Hermagor-Pressegger See has a disaster control plan. Among other things this plan contains possible disasters in the sense of the disaster relief law, disasters, which are not covered by the disaster relief law, organization disaster relief and a measure catalogue in accordance with §§ 4,5 u. 6 of the disaster relief law (A11a-b). In addition, since the Nassfeld ski area is at a relative high altitude, heavy snowfall in winter can cause problems on the roads or increase avalanche risk. Up-to-date information on weather and road closures are immediately posted on the website and the crisis management chain is set in motion. The current situation can also be viewed directly on the webcams or browsed on the website (A11c).⁴³ Finally, at the provincial level, the Office of the Carinthian Provincial Government offers a course program for disaster management. The target group are relevant employees, state and municipal employees, and employees of emergency organizations (A11d).⁴⁴

The destination has established clear Covid safe regulations and created a Buddy programme to ensure that rules are respected in all different locations, from slopes to restaurants.⁴⁵ Since 2012, have emergency corridors when traffic on highways is congested.⁴⁶

4.2.2. GSTC-D Section B - Socio-economic sustainability

B1. Measuring the economic contribution of tourism: The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination's economy is monitored and publicly reported. Appropriate measures may include levels of visitor volume, visitor expenditure, employment and investment and evidence on the distribution of economic benefits.

The Carinthian Economic Development Fund looks after and accompanies companies and institutions in the Carinthian economy to increase their competitiveness and that of the country (<https://kwf.at/>). They also collect statistical information in the region (B1a).⁴⁷ The NLW prepares annual reports on the direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism in the destination, including data on the number of establishments and number of beds, countries of origin in the winter and summer and overnight stays according to accommodation (B1b). In terms of indirect economic impacts on the region, the Slow Food Travel region helps SMEs use local agricultural production in tourism-related activities. It started 7 years ago with 13 establishments and in 2020 there are 26.

B2. Decent work and career opportunities: The destination encourages and supports career opportunities and training in tourism. The destination's tourism enterprises commit to providing equality of opportunity for local employment, training and advancement, a safe and secure working environment, and a living wage for all.

⁴² <https://www.karnische-energie.at/>

⁴³ Webcams: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Live-aus-der-Region/Webcam>; Website: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Live-aus-der-Region/Wetter>

⁴⁴ <https://www.ktn.gv.at/Verwaltung/Amt-der-Kaerntner-Landesregierung/Abteilung-3/Organisation/UA-Feuerwehrwesen-Katastrophenschutz-und-Zivildienst/Katastrophenmanagement>

⁴⁵ Covid safe rule: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Covid19-measures/>; Buddy programme: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Nassfeld-Buddy/>

⁴⁶ Emergency corridor: <https://www.asfinag.at/road-safety/being-safe-on-the-road/the-emergency-corridor/>; Traffic emergencies: <https://www.asfinag.at/traffic/traffic-infos/>

⁴⁷ WIBIS - Economic Policy Reporting and Information System Carinthia - Hermagor district profile 2019. https://wibis.kwf.at/fileadmin/user_upload/wibis_kaernten/regionsprofile/2020-05/B203_PROFIL_2_Daten_27.05.2020.pdf

In Villach there is a Higher education institute for tourism.⁴⁸ Villach is located outside of the Hermagor region but it is only 30 min away. In Villach there is also a Bachelor of Arts in Business in Hotel Management,⁴⁹ which represents the only one in Austria. The "Hotel Management" study program prepares students for the specific requirements of the hotel and catering industry. The study program builds upon on sound fundamental knowledge in core business areas and then focuses on the processes of accommodation (rooms division) and gastronomy (food and beverages) for guests. Moreover, topics of sales and marketing, controlling, personnel management as well as the design of guest experiences are covered in-depth (**B2a**).

In terms of commitment by tourism enterprises to the provision of decent work/ career opportunities, there are several examples (**B2b**). The Hotel and Chalets Regitnig at the Weissensee offers a job service with open positions on its website. Since education and further training is seen as important for the company, a variety of continuing training courses and added benefits are offered. The tourism enterprises described above naturally promote the local population and also offer possible jobs. Also the Biohotel Der Daberer, the Falkensteiner Hotel Carinzia in Tröpolach and the Almwelness-Resort Tuffbad in the Lesachtal offers a job service with open positions and requirements on its website and on Facebook. Also the education and further training is very important for this company. A variety of further training courses is offered. Free meals and accommodation are also offered.⁵⁰

According to a query at the Public Employment Service (AMS), no distinction is made between gender, age, or inclusion of minorities (**B2c**). In addition, the Public Employment Service offers information and support for the integration of people with disabilities into the labor market, including in tourism. The Chamber of labour in Hermagor also provides support to labour in the tourism sector (**B2d**).

B3. Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade: The destination encourages the retention of tourism spending in the local economy through supporting local enterprises, supply chains and sustainable investment. It promotes the development and purchase of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles and that reflect the area's nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.

There are a number of organisations within the destination that provide advice, finance and other types of support to SME in the NLW region. The Chamber of Commerce (Bezirksstelle) is in Hermagor and it is responsible for bringing in innovation and new ideas.⁵¹ Other projects described below are the Slow Food Travel Region Travel Alpe Adria Carinthia, "The Most Delicious Corner of Carinzia" and the Chamber of Agriculture which has developed the project "Holidays on the Farm".

The Slow Food Travel Region Travel Alpe Adria Carinthia developed seven years ago as a result of the connection that the NLW destination made to Slow Food (Box 1). The region coincides with the Hermagor region and it helps SMEs on how to use local agricultural production in tourism-related activities (**B3b**). The Slow Food Travel project aims to develop tourist routes and services by promoting local cultural, agricultural and gastronomic diversity. Visits to food producers, food artisans, tastings and, above all, the participation of visitors in the artisanal production of food and regional products play an important role.⁵² Slow Food is also the main project to help local tourism businesses buy local products. There are also two local shopping groups in the region. These companies take advantage of Slow Food Travel's offer and take part in workshops, purchase products from Slow Food Travel producers or advertise the offer to their own guests (**B3c**).⁵³ For example, the Biohotel Daberer, a Slow Food travel partner, provides guests with specific information on the website and on site about all other Slow Food Travel experiences. These can then be requested and booked directly.⁵⁴

Other initiatives that help local farmers, artisans and food producers to engage in the tourism value chain are described in Boxes 5 and 6 (**B3d**).

Box 5: Initiatives to supporting local entrepreneurs

⁴⁸ <https://www.kts-villach.at/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.fh-kaernten.at/studium/wirtschaft-management/bachelor/wirtschaft/hotelmanagement>

⁵⁰ <https://www.regitnig.com/service/jobs>; <https://www.biohotel-daberer.at/de/der-daberer/jobs>,
<https://www.falkensteiner.com/karriere>; <https://www.almwelness.com/de/wellnesshotel-kaernten-team/>

⁵¹ https://kaernten.arbeiterkammer.at/ueberuns/kontakt/beratungszentren/Servicestelle_Hermagor.html

⁵² <https://www.slowfood.travel/de/slow-food-travel-alpe-adria-kaernten/slow-food-travel/slow-food-travel-philosophie>

⁵³ http://www.slowfood.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Manifesto_Quality_ENG.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://www.biohotel-daberer.at/de/erlebnisse/slow-food-travel>

The **Most delicious corner of Carinzia**, in German "Köstlichstes Eck Kärntens" is a store part of the Slow Food Travel region, innovative and interested in exchanging knowledge with the destination. It is located in Kötschach-Mauthen.⁵⁵

The **Lesachtal Farm Shop** offers a wide range of handmade and homemade products from Europe's most natural valley in Maria Luggau, directly below the pilgrimage basilica. Up to 60 producers offer their goods in the atmospheric ambience of an old farmhouse. The range of products includes everything from the Lesachtal bread, homemade jams and juices, honey, fruit brandies, lamb products, various cheeses, basketry and knitted goods, wood carvings, wax products, pottery, products made from felt as well as beautiful handmade souvenirs.⁵⁶

Box 6: Holiday on a farm: initiative to supporting local farmers in tourism

"Holiday on a farm" ("Urlaub am Bauernhof") is an Austrian initiative that covers 9 regions. It also includes the Carinthia region and enables visitors to spend time in a farm. They are categorised in nine different types of farms and experiences, including: farms, chalet, estate, vineyards, active holidays, for babies and kids, organic, barrier free and horse farms.⁵⁷

Local produce and crafts are identified, promoted and available for sale to visitors in the destination (**B3e**). Farmers' markets with regional products and crafts take place regularly in Hermagor and Tröpolach.⁵⁸ These markets are announced and advertised on the website and in the mailings. For example, the promotion of local culinary products is provided through the Nassfeld page. Some of the listed products are related to the Alpine-Adriatic cuisine in the south-west of Carinthia, which includes Gailtaler Speck, fish from Weissensee, the Lesachtaler bread and the white Gailtaler land maize. Other products include the alpine cheese and the Loncium beer. The website also promotes the bacon farmer and the award-winning chef.⁵⁹

Weissensee has received the Carinthia Tourism Quality Initiative seal.⁶⁰ The "Tourismus-Qualitätsinitiative Kärnten" ("Carinthia Tourism Quality Initiative") project is an initiative of the Carinthian tourism regions. It was started by Kärnten Werbung (Carinthia Marketing) together with all tourism partners in the state (Carinthian tourism regions, the Carinthia Chamber of Commerce with its hotel, gastronomy and camping divisions, the state association for farm holidays, the association of private renters in Carinthia, the IG Kärnten Card, and Kärntner Seilbahnen cable car association). To receive the Carinthia Seal of Quality, establishments must fulfil the criteria set by the Carinthia Tourism Quality Initiative. Frequent consultation guarantees that an establishment's promise of quality to its guests is kept.

B4. Support for community: The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives in a responsible manner.

There are several initiatives that are organised to support sustainability in the destination. For example, together with Tibet Hilfe Gailtal, a cleanup day was organised to collect garbage on September 19, 2020 (**B4a**).

In Weissensee, there are strict regulations that impede the use of machinery in certain areas and of glyphosate to impede growth of weeds. In June 2020, an agreement was signed by local municipalities and associations to continue to avoid the use of glyphosate in the valley, which is at present forbidden.⁶¹ This means that farmers spend quite a lot of energy to maintain their areas without the use of machines. The Austrian railway also needs a way to clean tracks. Residents and visitors are thus encouraged to help local farmers as well as the railway company by handpicking weeds. Many volunteers

⁵⁵ <https://herwig-ertl.at/koestliches-eck-kaerntens/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.lesachtal.com/en/winter-2/kulinarik/lesachtaler-bauernladen.html>

⁵⁷ <https://www.farmholidays.com/holiday-destinations/carinthia/nassfeld-presseegger-lake-lesachtal?state=ktn>

⁵⁸ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Events/Top-Events>

⁵⁹ <https://kulinarik.nlw.at/de>

⁶⁰ <https://www.Weissensee.com/en/holidays/quality-seal-carinthia.html>

⁶¹ According to the Carinthian Parliament, there is an official ban on glyphosate, https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20190328_OTS0159/glyphosat-kaerntner-landtag-beschliesst-verbot-einstimmig-bild and https://www.meinbezirk.at/hermagor/c-lokales/kein-glyphosat-entlang-der-gailtalbahn_a4101933

have made themselves available to clean the railroad line between Kötschach and Hermagor glyphosphate-free and prepare it for the Gailtal Draisenen project.

Every year the section leader of the Alpine Club Obergailtal-Lesachtal organizes the environmental construction site, a project of the Alpine Club Austria.⁶² Volunteers come to clear the area around the Mauthner Alm and the Zollnersee. Tasks include clearing the alpine pasture area and marking the hiking trails. After work there is the opportunity to network with each other and to enjoy nature in a relaxed atmosphere (B4c).

B5. Preventing exploitation and discrimination: The destination upholds international standards on human rights. It has laws, practices and an established code of conduct to prevent and report on human trafficking, modern slavery and commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation, discrimination and harassment of or against anyone, particularly children, adolescents, women, LGBT and other minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated and enforced.

There are three major international and federal laws that prevent exploitation and discrimination (B5a). The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2016/C 202/02) provides the European regulation related to human rights. Article 5 relates to the "Prohibition of slavery and forced labour", Art.32 to the "Prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work" and Art. 21 is on "Non-discrimination". (B.5.a) The Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services, condemns harassment (Art. 4.3). At the national level, the protection against discrimination in employment is regulated in the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette No. 22/1970 (Section 7a).⁶³

Austria and its states are heavily involved in the protection of people and their rights. Vienna, for example, is the seat of the UN, etc. Austria is also part of the EU and must abide by the fundamental rights of the European Union. Austria has also signed the UN Charter on Human Rights. There are coordinating and informing bodies on the topic from national and federal state level. The destination does not have the right to legislate on this.⁶⁴ (B5b).

For this reason, risk and impact analysis regarding human rights, including human trafficking, modern slavery and child labour is not conducted regularly (B5c) and the destination and key tourism players are not currently signatories to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (B5d). This codex (thecode.org) focuses strongly on travel providers and destinations outside of Austria, which are estimated to be much more affected by this problem.

B6. Property and user rights: Laws and regulations regarding property rights and acquisitions are documented and enforced. They comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation and do not authorize resettlement without free prior and informed consent and fair and just compensation. Laws and regulations also protect user and access rights to key resources.

This criterion does not apply to the destination.

B7. Safety and security: The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards that addresses the needs of both visitors and residents.

Security and health services are well established in the destination (B7a). For example, in the Nassfeld-Pressegger See destination website it is possible to search information on available doctors, pharmacies, specialised professionals and emergency rescue on the ski slopes.⁶⁵ There is also a blocking system for visitors who may fall ill and be unable to use their holiday cards. In addition, in the destination there are local police offices, fire fighting stations, two large state hospitals as well as a network of local health services that are present in the smaller communities. General practitioners are present in every community because there is a very large doctor density per inhabitant.

The NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH constantly updates the website with information on the latest safety measures adopted to contrast the spread of Covid-19 (B7b). It also asks visitors to adhere to the rules that are in vigour and to adopt

⁶² https://www.meinbezirk.at/hermagor/c-lokales/umweltbaustelle-holt-europa-nach-mauthen_a2772704

⁶³ http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=42258

⁶⁴ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/verfassung/grund-und-menschenrechte/menschenrechts-koordinatorinnen-koordinatoren.htm>; https://www.ktn.gv.at/Verwaltung/Amt-der-Kaerntner-Landesregierung/Abteilung-1/Volksgruppen_Menschenrechte/Menschenrechte%282%29

⁶⁵ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Nassfeld-A-Z/?location=&category=5533&state=&q=>

responsible behaviours.⁶⁶ An example of how tourism facilities are inspected for compliance with safety and hygiene standards is provided by the Carinthia Tourism Quality Initiative.

B8. Access for all: Where practical, sites, facilities and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements or other special needs. Where sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that take into account both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved. Information is made available on the accessibility of sites, facilities and services.

The Federal Disability Equality Act, version dated October 29, 2020⁶⁷ aims to eliminate or prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. It ensures the equal participation of people with disabilities in society and sets provisions to enable them to lead a self-determined life (**B8a-b**).

The brochure "Barrier-Free. Information about your barrier-free holiday in Carinthia" written by the Carinthian Tourist Information Office, provides a list of accessible sites with details about their accessibility (**B8c**). The brochure includes information on nature guides, accessible accommodation (hotels, campsites, restaurants), accessible swimming pools, sporting activities, available professional specialists and specialised services. The Carnic Alps Geopark has received an award for its accessibility to partially sighted visitors.

The brochure "Experiencing nature for EVERYONE" written by the Carinthian Tourist Information Office, contains a list of accessible programmes in the Carinthian region (**B8d**).⁶⁸ Two of them take place in NLW: How does the alpine meadow get into the Gailtaler Almkäse (Wie kommt die Almwiese in den Gailtaler Almkäse) p. 15 and Evening walk (Abendspaziergang) p.17 (**B8d**).

The Nassfeld-Presssegger See region is currently working on the topic of accessibility for guests. The website "Holidays without limits accessibility in the World of Mountains & Lakes" shows examples of barrier-free access to the mountain railroad and to the cable cars, signposted parking spaces for the disabled and barrier-free ski school facilities. For winter sports enthusiasts with special needs, monoski and biskis are available and ski instructors have been specially trained for this sports equipment. Further accessibility initiatives are planned for the future (**B8e**).⁶⁹

ÖZIV, the Federal Association for People with Disabilities in Austria, also provides information about accessibility in some key sights in Carinthia, including Weissensee Nature Park and Nassfeld (**B8f**).⁷⁰ In the NLW destination there are currently three hotels listed in the website Holidays on Wheels (See box 7).⁷¹

Box 7: "Holiday on Wheels"

Companies listed on "Holidays on Wheels" must meet the quality criteria of the "Accessibility Check" and take the needs of people with disabilities into account. The "accessibility check" starts with a self-assessment form that the operator of an offer fills out. If the main criteria in the self-assessment are met according to this questionnaire, a visit is made by a person with disabilities or an expert who then looks at the company from the actual point of view of a handicapped person and forms an image and confirms that it is correct. If there are deficiencies, the company naturally has a certain period of time to rectify them. The period depends on the severity of the defects. Consideration is given to three months for easier ones and six months for more extensive ones.

⁶⁶ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Covid19-Massnahmen/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20004228>

⁶⁸ <https://www.kaernten.at/erlebnisse-in-kaernten/erlebnisse/KTN/6e4e671d-70ba-4a29-812c-ae048cd7e8fd/abendspaziergang>

⁶⁹ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Nassfeld-A-Z/Barrierefreiheit>

⁷⁰ https://www.oeziv.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Barrierefreies-Naturerleben-Karnten.pdf

⁷¹ <http://www.holidaysonwheels.at/de/regionen/kaernten/nassfeld-pressegger-see-lesachtal-Weissensee/>

4.2.3. GSTC-D Section C – Cultural Sustainability

C1. Protection of cultural assets: The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve cultural assets, including built heritage and cultural landscapes.

The webpage "Culture & Traditions" of Lesachtal written by the Lesachtal Tourism Destination, provides a list of the cultural assets in the area⁷² (C1a). The webpage "Gailtalnetz Cultural Database" written by the Gailtal network of the culture information service, provides a list of the cultural assets present in the Gailtal Valley.⁷³ Three Interreg Italia – Österreich projects aim to rehabilitate and conserve cultural assets in the destination (C1b) (See Box 8):⁷⁴

- MADE, Malga and Alm Desired Experience
- GeoTrAC project
- 365 Days - World of Mountains

Box 8: MADE, Malga and Alm Desired Experience

The Interreg Italia – Österreich project "MADE, Malga and Alm Desired Experience" carried out by the Info and Servicecenter Nassfeld-Pressegger See and the Tourism Promotion Consortium of the Tarvisio area, Sella Nevea and the Nassfeld Pass involves about 50 mountain huts.⁷⁵ The main objective of the MADE project is the development of a cross-border system that involves the mountain huts of Friuli Venezia Giulia in Italy and Carinthia and the hiking-cycling routes in nature. The goals are to preserve the cultural and natural heritage, strengthen a common identity, increase the seasonality of the tourist offer, support local production, increase employment, as well as strengthen sustainable mobility between neighbouring regions.

The Interreg Italia - Österreich project GeoTrAC project carried out by the Geopark Karnische Alpen in partnership with Italian organisations unites institutions that work in the territory of the Carnic Alps on geological protection and monitoring, research and the popularisation of science.⁷⁶ The objective is the creation of a cross-border Geopark that can be a reference for all those who are interested in geology, the natural environment, scientific knowledge or simply hiking.

The Interreg Italia - Österreich project "365 Days - World of Mountains" carried out by NLW and ARGE in partnership with the Consorzio del Tarvisiano aims to develop the two neighbouring border regions Nassfeld/Pramollo and Tarvisio/Valcanale into an all-year cross-border tourist destination while protecting the common natural and cultural heritage and enabling its sustainable economic use. With the implementation of cross-border packages and marketing activities, a visitor card, a booking portal and online-communication, prepared in cooperation with accommodation providers, tourist attractions and mobility offer, visitors will have a simplified and up to date access to tourist offers and services.

Currently, mechanisms for using income from tourism to support conservation of cultural assets has not been fully developed (C1c). However, farmers' markets are held regularly in the region and promote regional cultural products such as Gailtaler bacon, alpine cheese, game products, farmer's bread, fish, honey, honey products, homemade schnapps, liqueurs, and much more are available there. The farmers' markets are advertised on various platforms such as websites and social media channels.⁷⁷

C2. Cultural artefacts: The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts. The laws are enforced and publicly communicated, including to tourism enterprises and visitors.

The Bundesdenkmalamt offers various laws and regulations on its website (C2a).⁷⁸ For example, the following laws and regulations related to cultural assets: (1). Monument Protection Act, Federal Act of 25.9.1923 Federal Law Gazette No.

⁷² <https://www.lesachtal.com/en/summer/erlebnisse/kultur-brauchtum.html>

⁷³ <https://gailtalnetz.wordpress.com/diverses/kultur-vereine/>

⁷⁴ Link to Interreg projects: <http://www.interreg.net/en/gestione.asp>

⁷⁵ <http://www.madeinalps.eu/it/15758/il-progetto>

⁷⁶ <https://www.geoparcoalpicarniche.org/en/the-geopark/the-geotracs-project/>

⁷⁷ https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Events/Top-Events/Bauernmarkt-in-Hermagor_ev_11431/

⁷⁸ <https://bda.gv.at/rechtliche-grundlagen/gesetze-und-verordnungen/>

533/23 (DMSG), in the version of Federal Law Gazette I No. 92/2013; Federal Act on the Return of Unlawfully Removed Cultural Goods (Cultural Goods Return Law - KGRG), Federal Law Gazette I No. 19/2016. At the European level there is: EC Regulation of the Council No. 116/2009 of December 18, 2008 on the export of cultural goods (codified version), ABl. L 39 of February 10, 2009; and EU Commission Implementing Regulation No. 1081/2012 of 9 November 2012 on Council Regulation (EC) No. 116/2009 on the export of cultural goods (codified text), OJ. L 324 of November 22, 2012, corrected version OJ. L 93/86 of March 28, 2014. There is also the Directive 2014/60 / EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the return of cultural goods illegally removed from the territory of a Member State and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1024/2012 (new version), OJ. L 159 of May 28, 2014. Finally, the UNESCO Convention on Measures to Ban and Prevent the Inadmissible Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, Federal Law Gazette III No. 139/2015.

Given that the legislation is at the European and federal level, currently there is no communication or local enforcement at the destination level regarding relevant laws of cultural artifacts (**C2b-c**). However, this can be included in future communication by connecting to the website of the Bundesdenkmalamt.⁷⁹

In Carinthia, with over a thousand churches, there are a considerable number of sacred monuments. While the Roman cultural heritage is well documented archaeologically, structural aspects of the early medieval monasteries and churches of Carinthia have so far only been examined in isolated cases. Other examples of monuments relate to the historic wheel mill ensemble in Maria Luggau.⁸⁰

C3. Intangible heritage: The destination supports the celebration and protection of intangible cultural heritage, including local traditions, arts, music, language, gastronomy and other aspects of local identity and distinctiveness. The presentation, replication and interpretation of living culture and traditions is sensitive and respectful, seeks to involve and benefit local communities, and provides visitors with an authentic and genuine experience.

Intangible cultural heritage recognised at the international level is listed and promoted in the destination (**C3a**). For example, the production of the Lesachtal Bread is a UNESCO cultural heritage.⁸¹ The church days and traditional costumes of the lower Gailtal valley were also included as immaterial cultural heritage in 2018.⁸² Celebration and visitor experiences of intangible cultural heritage are encouraged (**C3b**). The Untergailtaler Kirchtag / Ziljski žegen takes place annually from May to October in numerous places in the Lower Gailtal valley in Carinthia (Box 9).⁸³

Box 9: Protecting intangible cultural heritage: The Untergailtaler Kirchtag / Ziljski žegen (Church days tradition)

It is made up of three main elements: the church day customs with going to church, the linden dance, the autochthonous songs and the Untergailtaler costume worn by the girls and boys on the church day. The date of the church day in the individual locations is based on the patronage festivals or the days of the church consecration. A second celebration concerns that "Kirchtag" festivals in Feistritz an der Gail, at Whitsun weekend. Traditional costumes that are over 100 years old are carefully unpacked, and young men riding bareback on Noriker horses complete their practice rounds (C3c). The pride of the young generation in their traditional costumes reflects the importance of this special occasion.

C4. Traditional access: The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.

In Austria and in the NLW destination there are no issues related to the protection and rehabilitation of local community access to any sites (C4c). However, at the European level, the European Heritage Label was originally launched as an

⁷⁹https://bda.gv.at/fileadmin/Dokumente/bda.gv.at/Publikationen/Verordnungen/Kaernten/Verordnung_Hermagor.pdf

⁸⁰ <https://bda.gv.at/ueber-uns/abteilungen-in-den-bundeslaendern/kaernten/>

⁸¹ <https://www.unesco.at/kultur/immaterielles-kulturerbe/oesterreichisches-verzeichnis/detail/article/lesachtaler-brotherstellung/>

⁸² <https://www.unesco.at/kultur/immaterielles-kulturerbe/oesterreichisches-verzeichnis/detail/article/untergailtaler-kirchtagsbraeuche-und-untergailtaler-tracht-ziljski-zegen-in-ziljska-nosa>

⁸³ The traditional Church Days in Gailtal (Die traditionellen Kirchtage im Gailtal) article. The article "A Church Day as if kissed by the sun" shows the traditional clothing worn during the traditional Church Days

https://www.meinbezirk.at/hermagor/c-leute/ein-kirchtag-wie-von-der-sonne-gekuesst_a2840594#gallery=null

intergovernmental initiative between several Member States in 2005.⁸⁴ In 2010, at the request of the Member States, the Commission proposed to officially declare the European Heritage Label an EU initiative. The Label was created by Decision No 1194/2011/EU. Its overall objective is to strengthen intercultural dialogue and the sense of belonging to the Union among European citizens. To achieve these objectives, sites are selected on the basis of their high symbolic value, their role in the history and culture of Europe and the European Union and their relation to democratic principles and human rights. To date, 29 sites have been awarded the label.

In the interactive tour guide of the destination, guests and locals can find all tours of our region, which are freely accessible. In the event that a tour has to be temporarily suspended due to construction work, for example, visitors to the website are informed directly in the tour guide. The tours listed are official tours and accessible to everyone (**C4a**).⁸⁵ The World of Mountains and Lakes website also provides information about the infrastructure in the region including opening hours.⁸⁶ There is no infrastructure that is not accessible and all of them can be visited by both guests and locals. The opening hours are requested and published by the ISC Nassfeld-Presssegger See.

Several times a year the municipality of Hermagor publishes the municipal newspaper. Since there was a lot of uncertainty about tourism and vacation planning for the summer of 2020 (due to COVID-19), it was decided to introduce the local people to the local tourist offer with a contribution to make use of the leisure time possibilities in the region.⁸⁷ This was very much appreciated and accepted by the locals (**C4b**).

C5. Intellectual property: The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.

Industrial property rights enable everyone to protect the fruits of intellectual and creative achievements as their intellectual property for a certain period of time in certain countries and to exclude others in principle from imitation, use and exploitation. This website explains what intellectual property rights are, when do they apply and how businesses can adopt them in Austria.⁸⁸

Many geographical names refer to products with special properties (**C5a**). Regulation (EU) number 1151/2012 serves to protect these designations of origin and geographical indications. Product designations with a reference to origin are used by many producers in a certain area. Indications of origin therefore do not represent the "property" of an individual. According to the Austrian Patent Office, they may be used by all producers who produce the product in the respective area according to the relevant trade practice or production guidelines (see Box 10).

Box 10. Protection of traditional gastronomic products

The Gailtaler Almkäse g.U. is a protected designation of origin (PDO) with indications of source.⁸⁹ Also the Gailtaler Speck g.g.A. is recognised and listed as with its protected geographical indication (PGI).⁹⁰ Evidence that intellectual property rights are protected in the development of cultural experiences for visitors (**C5c**) is evident for these two products. Cheese production has a long tradition in the Gailtal. The taste of this centuries-old cheese specialty of the Gailtaler Almkäse PDO⁹¹ which has won several international awards, is incomparable. The protected brand is also indicated on the packaging. In addition, only bacon that is produced in the Gailtal valley and meets the strict quality guidelines may be called Gailtaler Speck g.g.A.⁹² The protected brand is also indicated on the packaging. In the brochures on Gailtaler Almkäse PDO, Gailtaler Speck PGI and Slow Food Travel, the protected brands are noted and

⁸⁴ Fact Sheets on the European Union - Culture (Artikel 3 EUV):

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/de/sheet/137/kultur>

⁸⁵ Interactive Tour Guide: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Summer-World/Hike-World/Tourenuide/>

⁸⁶ World of Mountains and Lakes: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Nassfeld-A-Z/>

⁸⁷ Official Gazette June 2020, pages 16-17, 20-21 https://issuu.com/hermagor/docs/mtb_juni_2020_web

⁸⁸ Intellectual Property Rights: <https://www.wko.at/service/innovation-technologie-digitalisierung/einfuehrung-in-gewerbliche-schutzrechte.html>

⁸⁹ Gailtaler Almkäse g.U.

https://www.patentamt.at/fileadmin/root_oepa/Dateien/Marken/Herkunftsangaben/GailtalerAlmkaese.pdf

⁹⁰ Gailtaler Speck g.g.A.

https://www.patentamt.at/fileadmin/root_oepa/Dateien/Marken/Herkunftsangaben/GailtalerSpeck.pdf

⁹¹ <https://kulinarik.nlw.at/de/regional-einkaufen/gailtaler-almkaese>

⁹² <https://kulinarik.nlw.at/de/regional-einkaufen/gailtaler-speck>

described (**C5b**). These folders are available at several locations in the region and companies / locals / guests can also obtain these folders at the Nassfeld-Pressegger See information and service center.

C6. Visitor management at cultural sites: The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around cultural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.

Monitoring of visitor flow and impacts on cultural sites has not been carried out because the problems are mainly related to excessive use of private cars rather than actual access to the sites (**B6t**). In the future, the Holiday card and the tour guides could help to monitor numbers and impacts of tourism on sites and be officially reported. Issues related to mobility are being addressed as a key area of focus of the Climate and Energy Region Model developed through specific measures for increasing Public transport, supporting a Car-free vacation and pleasure tours (**C6b**).

There are several examples of published guidelines on visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events although monitoring of compliance it not carried out, also because the issue has not arisen (**C6c**). The NLW has developed a code of conduct on the mountains to ensure that whether alone or in a group, with family or friends, activities such as hiking, mountaineering, climbing, via ferrata and mountain biking are planned and safe. The most important rules of conduct are summarised on the website.⁹³

Safety is also promoted by local associations such as the Alpine Club of Austria. For example, the cultural site of the Garnitzenklamm is a popular excursion destination for guests and locals. It is divided into four sections. There are different routes and hiking trails through the gorge depending on the difficulty. The Austrian Alpine Club, section Hermagor is responsible for the management of the gorge. They have established rules for the gorge to hike safely.⁹⁴

The NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH has developed a specific page to inform tourists on the correct behaviour that visitors should have with regards to treatment of cows on pasturelands. A short video has also been developed, "Encountering cows on mountain pastures" to indicate a set of rules for visitor behaviour. ... "so that hiking remains a relaxed pleasure in every situation!"⁹⁵

On the website of the region, the most important tips for vacations with dogs are also pointed out.⁹⁶ These include information on accommodations, access to services for pets, tips for ensuring safety, i.e., on cable cars, and during encounters with cattle.

The guided hikes are led exclusively by trained mountain guides (**C6d**). Since April 1, 2010 the profession of mountain guide is legally anchored in the Carinthian Mountain and Ski Guide Act. According to this law, the guiding and accompanying of people on mountain hikes as well as the instruction in the skills and knowledge required for mountain hiking is reserved to officially licensed mountain guides for a fee. Remuneration is defined as any monetary or material benefit - even if such a benefit is provided voluntarily. How to deal with visitor management during guided hikes is laid down in the Carinthian Mountain and Ski Guide Act.⁹⁷

Every mountain guide has to attend at least one relevant advanced training course in intervals of two years in order to keep the authorization (§33 Carinthian Mountain and Ski Guide Law) (**C6e**). The course contents include mountain guiding techniques, rescue techniques, first aid, equipment, leadership skills and all innovations that are important for the work of

⁹³ Code of conduct on the mountains <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Summer-World/Hike-World/Sicherheit-am-Berg/>

⁹⁴ Garnitzenklamm gorge - Hiking through the gorge safely <https://en.garnitzenklamm.at/touren>

⁹⁵ Video "Encountering cows on mountain pastures" <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Summer-World/Hike-World/Sicherheit-am-Berg/Begegnung-mit-Kuehen/>

⁹⁶ Holidays with dogs in the region Nassfeld-Pressegger See: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Unterkunft-finden/Urlaub-mit-Hund/>

⁹⁷ Complete legal regulation for Carinthian mountain and ski guide law, K-BSFG, version of 15.10.2020 <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=10000263>

a mountain guide. The Carinthian Association of Mountain and Ski Guides is responsible for the implementation of the training courses. All the courses listed here comply with the legal obligation of advanced training.⁹⁸

C7. Site interpretation: Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with host community collaboration, and clearly communicated in languages pertinent to visitors and residents.

Provision of informative interpretative material on site and in formats that are accessible pre-arrival are widely available in the destination (**C7a**). The Summer Activity programme described in detail guided hikes for the entire summer.⁹⁹ The guide includes safety tips. For further or more detailed questions, guests and accommodation companies can also contact the ISC Nassfeld-Pressegger See. The interactive tour guide present on the website provides guests and locals with information on all the freely accessible guided tours in our region, including the offered guided walks, in both English and Italian (**C7e**). The listed tours have information on length, duration, elevation gain, and provide a map of the tour. The official guided tours are open to everyone.¹⁰⁰ The Carnic Alps Geopark also offers guided hikes.¹⁰¹

The interpretative material has been well researched and is accurate (**C7b**). The tours are worked out together with the trained hiking guides. Before a new tour is started, it is also hiked. Interpretation material that identifies the significance and sensitivity/fragility of sites (**C7c**) is found in the list of publications of the Geopark of the Carnic Alps in the field of geology concerning the region.¹⁰² In the ISC Nassfeld-Pressegger See there are various brochures and publications, both illustrative material and for issue (partly with costs). For example, the Geotrail Guide - Fascination of Geology - along 5 geotrails (only German language), the folder on the historical mile at Nassfeld (German, English and Italian) and the Geotrail Folder (German, English and Italian) are included.

4.2.4. GSTC-D Section D – Environmental Sustainability

D1. Protection of sensitive environments: The destination has a system to monitor, measure and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

The Carinthian Nature Conservation Act 2002 details the Carinthian regulation related to nature conservation (**D1b**).¹⁰³ In particular sections 2,4,5,6,7 refer to biodiversity and natural heritage conservation.

The National Geopark Carnic Alps, which was established in 2015, covers 830 km² or eight municipalities. The Carnic Alps Geopark, with its geological history and infrastructure facilities, offers a variety of activities to convey the exciting geological contents in a way that is suitable for the target group and to introduce visitors to the world of geology. There are currently efforts to create a "cross-border geopark" with Friuli Venezia Giulia. The total protected area in the district of Hermagor and in Weissensee is 105 km².

The website of the Department 8 of the Carinthian Government shows a description of Carinthian Protected Areas (Figure 32) (**D1a**).¹⁰⁴ There are many different categories of protected areas around the world with different protection contents and objectives. In Carinthia, two types of protected areas can be distinguished: on the one hand, those that are established on the basis of a legal basis (in Carinthia, on the basis of the Carinthian Nature Conservation Act 2002, this would be, for example, nature, landscape protection areas, natural monuments, specially protected caves, European protected areas or on the basis of the Carinthian National Park and Biosphere Park Act, the National Park and the Biosphere Park) and, on

⁹⁸ Advanced training for Carinthian Mountain Guides: <https://www.bergwanderfuehrer-kaernten.at/ausbildung/fortbildung/>

⁹⁹ Summer Activity Programme for 2020:

https://www.nassfeld.at/PDFs/Programme/Freizeitprogramm/2020/Aktivprogramm%202020_Brosch%C3%BCre_EN.pdf

¹⁰⁰ Interactive Tour Guide: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Summer-World/Hike-World/Tourenguide/>

¹⁰¹ Geopark of the Carnic Alps: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Summer-World/Hike-World/Berge-erleben/Geopark-Karnische-Alpen-gefuehrte-Angebote>

¹⁰² <https://www.geopark-karnische-alpen.at/Publikationen.911.0.html>

¹⁰³ Carinthian Nature Conservation Act 2002.

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=20000118>

¹⁰⁴ Department of Environment, Energy and Nature Conservation of the Carinthian Provincial Government

<https://www.ktn.gv.at/Themen-AZ/Details?thema=11&detail=1035>

the other hand, those that represent an award in the form of a predicate or seal of approval (e.g. Ramsar area, biogenetic reserve). The website allows to access information related to the Carinthian Nature Conservation Act 2002, the Carinthian animal species protection ordinance, the Carinthian Plant Species Protection Ordinance, the Carinthian mushroom regulation, the Carinthian National Park and Biosphere Park Act 2019 - K-NBG 2019, the Protected area maps, and the Natura 2000 Network Viewer.

In the interactive map of the Natura 2000 areas, nine sites are identified in the destination (see figure 21).¹⁰⁵ They include: Görtzschacher Moos - Obermoos im Gailtal (SiteCode: AT2116000), Garnitzenklamm (SiteCode: AT2159000), Kirchbachgraben (SiteCode: AT2168000), Kronhofgraben (SiteCode: AT2161000), Wolayersee und Umgebung (SiteCode: AT2109000), Gail im Lesachtal (SiteCode: AT2118000), Mussen (SiteCode: AT2106000), Kalktuffquellen Lappenbach (SiteCode: AT2135000), Möserner Moor (SiteCode: AT2123000). All sites contain information following the Standard Data Form of the NATura 2000 network and includes information on: 1. site identification, 2. site location, 3. ecological information, 4. site description, 5. site protection status, 6. site management and 7. map of the site. Programmes to conserve biodiversity in Natura 2000 sites are also described, including Territory management plans and Measures and plans of the Natura 2000 areas in Carinthia.¹⁰⁶

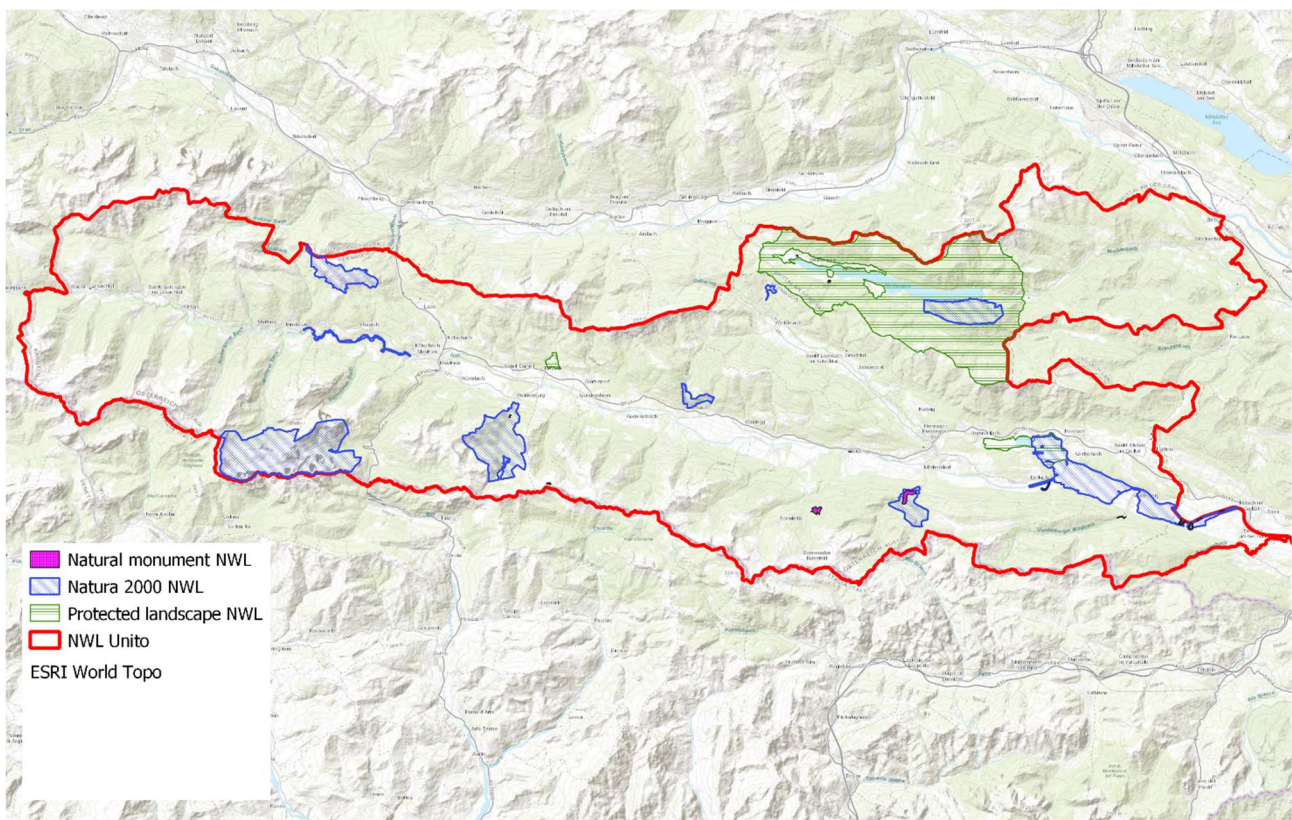


Figure 32. Map of protected sites in the destination

The Regulation (Eu) No 1143/2014 Of The European Parliament And Of The Council is related to the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (**D1c**). According to section 21 of the Carinthian Nature Conservation Act 2002, a governmental approval is required for the introduction of alien species.¹⁰⁷ The article "Fight against Invasive Plants" by the ORF, describes some activities that have been carried out by the Carinthian goverment in order to eradicate and control invasive plants.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ The Natura 2000 Network Viewer and Standard Data form: <https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.ktn.gv.at/Verwaltung/Amt-der-Kaerntner-Landesregierung/Abteilung-8/Schutzgebiete>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=20000118>

¹⁰⁸ Online article: Fight against Invasive Plants (Kampf gegen invasive Pflanzen):

<https://kaernten.orf.at/v2/news/stories/2807880> Online article: Measures against invasive neophytes (Maßnahmen gegen invasive Neophyten): <https://www.naturparke.at/ueber-uns/landschaften-voller-leben/ma%C3%9Fnahmen-gegen-invasive-neophyten/>

Box 8. The Weissensee Nature Park Strategy

In the Nature Park Strategy 2020 of Weissensee, programs to eradicate Neophyten are described. In 2014, the neophyte population in the Weissensee Nature Park was analyzed and mapped. Information evenings for the population in the nature park community were held to combat neophytes. A separate information sheet on the fight against neophytes was created, sent and published in the bulletin of the municipality of Stockenboi and in the Weissensee public Journal (**D1f**). Every year, the nature park rangers, and some of the nature park schools, carry out controls in selected locations.

In order to identify, monitor and mitigate tourism impacts on biodiversity and natural heritage (**D1d**), the webpage dedicated to Skitourism in the Nassfeld- Pressegger see area, informs and empower tourists towards respect for biodiversity.¹⁰⁹ In addition, warning signs are also found along trails. For example, the sign "Wildlife refuge" alerts guests they have to be careful with the grouse birds' rest areas in Nassfeld - Hermagor.¹¹⁰

D2. Visitor management at natural sites: The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around natural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.

Monitoring of visitor flows and impact on natural sites, with results shared across the destination (**D2a**) is not an issue at present, since there is no over tourism in the destination. Also, at the moment the effects of COVID-19 cannot yet be taken into account but it will influence use of the natural areas, especially from the perspective of day visitors rather than longer stay visitors.

In order to manage and mitigate tourism-related impacts in or around natural sites (D2b), the "mobil+" experience ticket is an extension of the Weissensee guest card that includes all mobility services included in the card.¹¹¹ In the summer it includes: Nature Park Bus, Station shuttle, Hiking bus region and an e-bike tour according to programme. In the winter it includes the Nature Park Bus and the Station shuttle. The goal through the KEM Implementation is to increase the share of use of public transit from 10 to 15% by 2023.

Measures are taken to inform visitors on correct behaviour in and around natural sites. However, no specific monitoring is being carried out since there is no evidence of pressure on these sites (**D2c**). For example, the rules of conduct in the Weissensee Nature Park are described at the end of the Nature park strategy 2020 of Weissensee. Provisions include: Leaving wildlife to rests; maintain distance for observation; avoiding feeding and disturbing grazing animals. Keeping dogs on a leash. Sign to inform tourists on forbidden behaviour in Garnitzen natural area use the following warning: "GARNITZENKLamm NATURAL SIGHT -The erection of structures, wire lines, attaching boards, carrying out digging and blasting work, collecting plants and animals and defiling the natural monument would contradict the protective measures and is therefore prohibited. Please help to protect the natural monument from wilful interference."

A code of practice for tour operators and tour guides and/or other engagement with them on visitor management at natural sites has been set up by the Austrian Alpine Club (**D2d**) with specific rules for behaviour.¹¹² These call for finding solutions cooperatively, and to call for visitor control measures only where it is necessary from a (wild) ecological point of view; there is a corresponding pressure to use and the areas of conflict are only surveyed or regulated selectively and not extensively.

Also, as described above, the Association of Carinthian Mountain Guides offers its members advanced training on various topics. Topics such as nature conservation and sustainability already play an important role during the training (**D2f**).

Cooperation with local conservation bodies to identify environmental risks associated with tourism and measures to reduce them are developed by the destination for specific projects. For example, within the framework of the INTERREG project

¹⁰⁹ Reasons for going on a ski tour> Good to know: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Winter-World/Outdoor-Relax-World/Skitouren>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.skiresort.at/skigebiet/nassfeld-hermagor/bewertung/umweltfreundlichkeit/>

¹¹¹ Mobil+ experience: <https://www.Weissensee.com/en/Weissensee/guestcard-discounts-carinthia.html>

¹¹² Österreichischer Alpenverein - Nature and environment - Visitor guidance
<https://www.alpenverein.at/portal/natur-umwelt/av-naturschutz/besucherlenkung/index.php>;
<https://www.bergwanderfuehrer-kaernten.at/ausbildung/fortbildung/>

MADE, infopoints were set up on the cheese pastures. For this purpose, a nature conservation permit was obtained from the district administration of Hermagor.

D3. Wildlife interaction: The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for wildlife interactions. Interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse impacts on the animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.

The Carinthian Hunting Act regulates the activities of hunting and the website of the Carinthian Hunting Association provides all hunting related regulation which applies in Carinthia (**D3a**).¹¹³

All regulations on wildlife are included in the Carinthian Hunting Act 2000. In the Carinthian law there is currently nothing written about international standards for wildlife viewing (D3b). In the destination there are however guidelines to avoid disturbing wildlife (D3c). In addition, the Nassfeld -Pressegger See destination's website informs and empowers tourists about the correct way to interact with mountain cows (**D3f**)¹¹⁴. Interactions with wildlife has not been observed as a problem (D3d and D3e).

D4. Species exploitation and animal welfare: The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards that seek to ensure animal welfare and conservation of species (animals, plants and all living organisms). This includes the harvesting or capture, trade, display, and sale of wildlife species and their products. No species of wild animal is acquired, bred or held captive, except by authorized and suitably equipped persons and for properly regulated activities. Housing, care and handling of all wild and domestic animals meets the highest standards of animal welfare.

Austria is a member of the 1973 Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and has implemented the Convention through a Species Trade Act of 2009 that also transposes the relevant European Union Legislation (**D4e**).¹¹⁵ The table on national legislation has been updated based on information provided in the 2009-10 CITES Biennial Reports (in February 2012). Implementation and enforcement of the endangered species regime are handled at the federal level, in part by the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, and in part by the Ministry for Finance. For example, big cats are subject to stringent export/import controls.

The Legal regulation for animal welfare and events regulates the protection and use of animals (**D4a**).¹¹⁶ Since April 1, 2016, wildlife shows, buying and exchanges with wild animals such as snakes have been banned in Austria.¹¹⁷ The National Government webpage dedicated to pets shows current information on pets, animal-friendly pet keeping, keeping dogs, keeping cats, keeping small rodents, keeping ferrets, taking animals on public transport, etc.¹¹⁸ In addition, According to the national law, the keeping of certain animal species is notifiable (e.g. wild animals that have special requirements for keeping) or requires a permit (e.g. keeping animals in the zoo, in the circus, in the context of a commercial activity, at events).¹¹⁹

With regards to wild animals and plants, the Mushroom protection regulation from the Carinthian Government also regulates the harvest of mushrooms.¹²⁰ The Carinthian Government has issued the Plant Species Protection Ordinance. Among the protected species there is the *Wulfenia carinthiaca*, a plant symbol of Hermagor.¹²¹ Section 67 of the Carinthian Nature Conservation Act describes fines and penalties against violators of the law (D4g; see also D3a).

¹¹³ Carinthian Hunting Act 2000 - K-JG 2000: <https://www.kaerntner-jaegerschaft.at/index.php/gesetze.html>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Summer-World/Hike-World/Sicherheit-am-Berg/Begegnung-mit-Kuehen>

¹¹⁵ CITES and UE legislation: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/national_legislation.pdf

¹¹⁶ Legal regulation for animal welfare and events (Rechtsvorschrift für Tierschutz-Veranstaltungsverordnung): <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20003825>

¹¹⁷ Ban on wildlife shows (Verbot von Wildtierbörsen, 2016) https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/freizeit_und_strassenverkehr/haustiere/Seite.742011.html

¹¹⁸ Pets: https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/freizeit_und_strassenverkehr/haustiere.html

¹¹⁹ Prohibition of keeping certain animal species (Verbot der Haltung bestimmter Tierarten): https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/freizeit_und_strassenverkehr/haustiere/Seite.742020.html

¹²⁰ Mushroom regulation from Karinzia in 2014: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=20000262>

¹²¹ Pant species protection ordinance (Pflanzenartenschutzverordnung): <file:///C:/Users/tib09/AppData/Local/Temp/Pflanzenartenschutzverordnung,%20Fassung%20vom%2025.01.2018.pdf>

In order to inform of laws, standards and guidelines to tourism enterprises and guides (D4b), every year, the municipality of Hermagor creates a folder on fishing with information on the fishing regulations. In the last 2 years this folder was not made, because fishing was not allowed in the Gail due to the impacts of storms in autumn 2018.

The specialized unit for animal-fair animal husbandry and animal protection is a federal institution and reports to the Federal Minister of Health and Women. It serves as a central information and assessment centre in the field of animal protection and in its activities takes into account the state of the art in science and research as well as social and economic developments and practical experience (D4c).¹²² With the Federal animal protection law, there are also provisions for keeping of red, sika, fallow, moufflon and wild boar. For the training of examiners nothing is specified Austria-wide (D4d).¹²³

Currently, provision of information to visitors regarding the prevention of trade in endangered species in our region has not emerged as an issue in the destination (D4f). It will be possible to take this topic in the next years and to discuss and work on it in a workshop.

D5. Energy conservation: The destination has targets to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, as well as increase the use of renewable energy. The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report their contribution to these targets.

According to the report "The federal states in the energy transition comparison (Die Bundesländer im Energiewende-Vergleich)" by the Austrian Biomass Association (Österreichischer Biomasse-Verband), the regional share of renewable energy over the years has increased to 52,9%, leading it to be the first in Austria (D5c).¹²⁴

The "Climate and Energy Model Region Carnic Energy" (KEM) is an initiative of the Climate and Energy Fund and the Ministry of the Environment to help Austrian regions in making optimal use of their local renewable energy resources and in anchoring the climate policy objectives of the federal government at regional and local level (D5a).¹²⁵ The website page of Klima- und Energiemodellregion (KEM) Karnische Energie describes the steps followed by the Carinthian region under the program Klima- und Energie-Modellregionen (KEM) and the actions taken to achieve the regional energy consumption targets.¹²⁶ Annual reports and indicators describe the energy consumption targets of the region.

At present, indicators include: Share of municipalities in the energy region with energy management for municipal buildings and systems (42.86%), PV installed per PE (0.28 kWp / PE); Car-sharing vehicles in the region per 1000 inhabitants (0.33/1000 inhabitants); and Energy advice for households and businesses per 1000 PE (11.63 number / 1000 PE).

Box. 6. Best practice: e5 award

The **e5 program** encourages and supports Austria's municipalities to modernize their energy and climate protection policy, to save energy and thus costs and to make greater use of renewable energy sources (D5b). The commitment of each individual community is an essential contribution to climate protection in Austria, Europe and the world. The municipalities thus form the foundation for the energy transition. 240 municipalities and cities from 7 federal states are currently participating in the e5 program throughout Austria, including 4 state capitals. Over 19.2% of the Austrian population already lives in an e5 community. Together these communities have developed 687 "e". Five municipalities in the destination (Kötschach-Mauthen, Weissensee, Hermagor-Pressegger See, Stockenboi, Gitschtal) participate in the programme for energy-efficient communities, which means that the municipal buildings of these five municipalities are already almost exclusively heated with heat from renewable sources, as well as supplied with green electricity. Two municipalities have already achieved 5th status, which represents the highest level of sustainability: Kötschach-Mauthen and Weissensee. As an e5 community, actively contribute to climate protection in Austria.¹²⁷

¹²² Federal legislation for animal protection law, version of 12.10.2020 § 18a.

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20003541>

¹²³ Provisions according to the 1. animal husbandry ordinance (print: pages 40-41) online: Anlage 8:

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20003820>

¹²⁴ "The federal states in the energy transition comparison" https://www.biomasseverband.at/wp-content/uploads/Bioenergie-Atlas_2019.pdf

¹²⁵ <https://www.karnische-energie.at/>

¹²⁶ Carinthian Energy, Climate and Energy Model Region Carnic Energy:

<https://www.klimaundenergiemodellregionen.at/showkem.php?id=B370017>

¹²⁷ <https://www.e5-gemeinden.at/englisches-menue/en/e5-programme>

The **Alpe Adria Energie (AAE)** has been for 135 years a pioneer in the field of natural energy and is committed to changing the Austrian electricity mix in favour of renewable energy sources by producing and selling green electricity (**D5c**). Family-owned companies such as AlpenAdriaEnergie GmbH offers electricity from the Austrian eco-electricity pioneer and has numerous certificates and awards. The AAE guarantees 100% clean electricity, without nuclear power and waste of rare fossil fuels. The AAE generates electricity exclusively from renewable energy sources, such as wind, water and solar. Delegations from all over the world travel to the Carinthian energy self-sufficient community of Kötschach-Mauthen to learn about future-oriented energy production.¹²⁸

In addition, in the centres of Kötschach and Hermagor, and also in the peripheral areas such as Sonnenalpe Nassfeld and Lesachtal, there are **biomass local heating plants** that supply local infrastructure with heat. In Hermagor, the municipal buildings were thermally renovated in rational energy use or resource savings. Energy consumption is continuously monitored by a monthly energy accounting system. With 11 local heating networks and many microgrids, Hermagor ranks among the leaders in Carinthia in terms of renewable heat supply.

Support and incentives for energy monitoring and reduction by enterprises (**D5d**): the **association energie_autark** (Box 3) is involved in the community and in the region in the direction of awareness-raising/training and informs about current subsidies for new construction, renovation, conversion and use of heating systems from renewable energy sources as well as electric mobility. Currently, members of the association are also actively involved in the implementation concept KEM Tourism.

As part of its KEM program and in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism (BMNT), the Climate and Energy Fund is looking for a model tourism region that would like to implement particularly exemplary and ambitious climate protection projects (**D5b**). In the summer of this year, the Climate and Energy Fund called on Austrian regions to take part in the "KEM Tourism" tender. Regions from Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol were selected from the nine submissions for the "KEM Tourism" tender developed a concrete implementation concept. The government is looking for a region that takes comprehensive and ambitious measures in the area of climate protection. Measures in the areas of buildings, energy efficiency, tourism consumption and resource consumption as well as renewable energies in tourism infrastructure are in demand. Above all, however, the mobility sector is a key sector, especially in tourism. A budget of one million euros is available for implementation.

Within the framework of the project **Altervis – Self-sufficiency with renewable energies**, a model of the regional energy system was developed. On the basis of this model, three scenarios were then created, which shows the impact of different measures on the possible energy self-sufficiency of the district.

D6. Water stewardship: The destination encourages enterprises to measure, monitor, publicly report and manage water usage. Water risk in the destination is assessed and documented. In cases of high water risk, water stewardship goals are identified and actively pursued with enterprises, to ensure that tourism use does not conflict with the needs of local communities and ecosystems.

The Carinthian government has two programs to regularly assess water risk (**D6b**). The portal "Hydrographic Service Carinthia - flood warning service" shows water-related alerts in Carinthian provinces.¹²⁹ The portal "Hydrography - online service" collects periodical water management reports in Carinthia.¹³⁰ In addition, current hydrographic data on precipitation, ground water levels, and other water related information are reported in real time.¹³¹

Water risk has been assessed as low and as such there is currently no Water Stewardship regulation (**D6c**). In the district of Hermagor, water shortages occur only in absolutely rare cases. If this should occur, the district administration will issue a decree which will be sent to the individual communities as soon as possible and will also be published directly on the website. This decree contains information about the problem or water risk and how to proceed. The regulation can only be cancelled directly by the district administration of Hermagor.¹³²

¹²⁸ www.aae.at

¹²⁹ Hydrographic Service Carinthia - flood warning service (Hydrographischer Dienst Kärnten - Hochwasserwarnservice): <https://info.ktn.gv.at/asp/hydro/daten/hydroportal/warnung.asp>

¹³⁰ Hydrography - online service (Hydrographie - Onlineservice): <https://www.ktn.gv.at/Themen-AZ/Details?thema=11&subthema=58&detail=383>

¹³¹ Hydrographic data: <https://www.ktn.gv.at/Themen-AZ/Uebersicht?thema=11&subthema=58>

¹³² District administration Hermagor - Official plaque/publications: <https://www.ktn.gv.at/Verwaltung/Bezirke/BH-Hermagor/Amtstafel>

The Nassfeld ski area consists of three lift companies. In order to guarantee skiing, the use of snow cannons is indispensable. Each of the lift companies has its own water reservoir. If necessary, there is a pipe from the valley to the ponds over which water can be pumped. With the new storage pond Rudnigalm, which is fed exclusively naturally, there is a complete elimination of pumping water from the valley. There will be savings of approx. 600,000 kWh/year (D6a). An author of the medium "Die Woche Gailtal" has intensively studied this issue and wrote an article.¹³³

Since water risk is low, no visitor information on water risk and minimising water use has yet been developed but it could be developed in the future (D6e).

D7. Water quality: The destination monitors water quality for drinking, recreational and ecological purposes using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.

The Carinthian Water Law Act not only provides a regulation for water use and management but gives some provisions for the improvement of water quality (D7a).¹³⁴ According to Art. 30, deterioration is avoided and the state of aquatic ecosystems and the terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly dependent on them are protected and improved with regard to their water balance. In addition, sustainable water use based on long-term protection of available resources is promoted, that improve the aquatic environment, among others.

The federal and state-wide monitoring program of the flowing waters of Carinthia by the Carinthian Institute for Lake Research (Kärntner Institut für Seenforschung) serves to assess and control the chemical and ecological status (D7a).¹³⁵ The water monitoring therefore serves to protect the water. On the one hand, the permanent observations enable the detection of new sources of danger, but also to control success control as a result of the measures taken.

The survey of the water quality in Austria by the Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, ongoing until 2021 describes the monitoring of Austrian water quality (D7b).¹³⁶ In addition, every year there is an assessment of the lake water quality in Carinthia and lakes are classified according to their trophy within the framework of the regional monitoring network, and the ecological status of seven lakes is determined within the framework of the federal monitoring network using the quality element algae (phytoplankton). The trophic classification is carried out for all examined lakes based on ÖNORM 6231. Essentially, this classification reflects the nutrient load. The ecological status is determined according to the requirements of the Quality Target Ordinance Ecology Surface Waters (QZV Ökologie OG, BGBl. II No. 99/2010 as amended). The ecological status is assessed in relation to the composition and quality of the communities in the water. The results are made available on the one hand in the annual "Carinthian Lake Report" and on the other hand via the Internet on the websites of the Federal Environment Agency and the Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism. The website of the Carinthian Institute for Lake Research (Kärntner Institut für Seenforschung) provides a collection of the annual reports.¹³⁷

The sampling and chemical analysis for the assessment of the water quality in groundwater and flowing waters in accordance with the Water Condition Monitoring Ordinance (GZÜV) are publicly tendered at 3-year intervals. The services for the period of the first observation in 2019 and the subsequent repeated observation until 2021 were awarded in spring 2018 in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Procurement Act 2006.¹³⁸ The client is the federal government, the awarding and processing of the orders is carried out by the federal states.

In terms of monitoring bathing water, with certification and identification of sites reaching set standards (D7c), bathing water monitoring in Austria shows a detailed section for each region.¹³⁹ The assessment is made according to uniform European criteria by the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Bundesministeriums

¹³³ https://www.meinbezirk.at/hermagor/c-wirtschaft/wasser-hat-absolute-prioritaet_a3716640

¹³⁴ Water Law Act – Wasserrechtsgesetz:

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10010290>

¹³⁵ Water quality monitoring: <https://kis.ktn.gv.at/fluesse/monitoring>

¹³⁶ Survey of water quality in Austria: D.7.a_Ergebnisse der Ausschreibung_2019-2021_öffentlich_2019-05-22

¹³⁷ Lake reports: <https://kis.ktn.gv.at/seen/seenbewertung>;

<https://kis.ktn.gv.at/Informationen/Seenberichte%20%28Archiv%29>

¹³⁸ Report on the results of the public tender GZÜV 2019-2021 - Bericht zu den Ergebnissen der öffentlichen Ausschreibung GZÜV 2019-2021:

https://www.bmlrt.gv.at/wasser/wasserqualitaet/ergebnisse_ausschreibung_gzuv_2019-2021.html

¹³⁹ Bathing water monitoring (Badegewässermonitoring):

<https://www.ages.at/themen/umwelt/wasser/badegewaesser/>

für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz). In the destination, bathing water reports with a focus on Pressegger See show weakly mesotrophic and a very good ecological status, while Weissensee lake resulted in an oligotrophic status, with a very good ecological status.

Besides regular monitoring, several actions to maintain and improve water quality have been undertaken (**D7d**):

- Pressegger See is surrounded by an extensive reed belt, which has been designated an EU Natura 2000 protected area. The preservation and maintenance of this reed belt is necessary to further maintain or improve the water quality of Pressegger See.¹⁴⁰
- In winter there is a lot of activity on the largest natural ice surface in the Weissensee Nature Park. Unfortunately, however, the skaters also leave a lot of garbage on the ice. Measures have been worked on, because the garbage gets into the water and the water quality suffers.¹⁴¹

The page "Lake fishing - fishing in drinking water" on the NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH's website highlights how Weissensee waters are so pure they are good for drinking (**D7e**).¹⁴²

D8. Wastewater: The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems. The destination ensures that wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely without adverse impacts on the local population and the environment.

The 8th section of the Carinthian Municipal Sewerage Act, emanated by the Carinthian Government and updated on the 21 August 2020, describes water disposal principles (**D8a**).¹⁴³

The 5th section, Article 27 of the Carinthian Municipal Sewerage Act, emanated by the Carinthian Government and updated on the 21 August 2020, describes criminal provisions in order to enforce guidelines amongst enterprises (**D8b**). The 1st section, Article 10 of the Carinthian Municipal Sewerage Act, emanated by the Carinthian Government and updated on the 21 August 2020, provides a ground for monitoring/testing of released wastewater, which is assigned to Municipalities (**D8c**).

The Carinthian waste management code, emanated by the Carinthian Government in 2004 and lastly updated in 2018, describes the waste treatment regulation, including the one related to wastewater.¹⁴⁴ (**D8b**). The 10th section, Article 67 of the Carinthian waste management code, emanated by the Carinthian Government in 2004 and lastly updated in 2018, describes criminal provisions in order to enforce guidelines amongst enterprises (**D8b**).

Public water supply systems - control: Internal control and external monitoring in the federal state of Carinthia (**D8b**). Self-monitoring and external monitoring of drinking water supply systems in the federal state of Carinthia.¹⁴⁵

The **Wastewater Association Karnische Region** consists of the three member municipalities Hermagor-Pressegger See, Kirchbach and Gitschtal (**D8d**).¹⁴⁶ The wastewater association establishes and operates all wastewater disposal plants with associated pumping stations in these municipalities, both domestic and operational. It includes: Construction and operation of all wastewater disposal systems, Maintenance of the jointly built wastewater treatment plant, Purification of the wastewater in the wastewater treatment plant.

D9. Solid waste: The destination measures and reports on its generation of waste and sets targets for its reduction. It ensures solid waste is properly treated and diverted from landfill, with provision of a multiple-stream collection and recycling system which effectively separates waste by type. The destination encourages enterprises to avoid, reduce,

¹⁴⁰ Reed belt Pressegger See: <https://www.camping-max.com/der-see/>

¹⁴¹ Nature park plan 2020 for Weissensee - Waste collection islands on the ice, page 63:
<https://www.Weissensee.com/andsrv/server.and?a=File&i=580&h=9e45770aa72388595d7b910d6b37015e5afc7515&e=.pdf>

¹⁴² Lake fishing - fishing in drinking water (Seenfischen - Angeln im Trinkwasser): <https://www.nlw.at/de/fischen/de>

¹⁴³ Carinthian Municipal Sewerage Act (Kärntner Gemeindekanalisationsgesetz):
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=20000011>

¹⁴⁴ Carinthian waste management code (Kärntner Abfallwirtschaftsordnung):
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=20000168>

¹⁴⁵ Public water supply system: <https://www.ktn.gv.at/DE/sitemap/KTN/Themen-AZ/Details?thema=11&subthema=58&detail=113>

¹⁴⁶ Tasks of the Wastewater Association Climate and energy model region: <https://awvkr.at/aufgaben/>

reuse, and recycle solid waste, including food waste. Action is taken to eliminate or reduce single-use items, especially plastics. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.

The AWW Westkärnten is an association of 13 municipalities of the district Spittal an der Drau and 6 municipalities of the district Hermagor and was founded in 1978. Modern and sustainable waste management as well as environmental and waste consulting play an essential role in our society. The tasks include waste avoidance, waste recycling and waste disposal (D9a).¹⁴⁷ The website page of Abfallwirtschaftverband (AWV) Westkärnten provides a list of the municipalities involved in the company, which is under public law (D9d).

Biowaste is treated separately by composting and fermentation. The resulting compost and digestate is then returned to the environment, including in horticulture and agriculture. The digestate and compost resulting from the treatment of biowaste must meet special hygienic requirements.¹⁴⁸

The Abfallwirtschaftsverband Westkärnten offers environmental consulting services for various institutions (D9b).¹⁴⁹ Examples are tourism businesses, schools and kindergartens. The website shows information related to environmental advice from Abfallwirtschaftverband (AWV) Westkärnten, a waste management corporation under public law, which operates in West Carinthia. In particular the company provides information to different stakeholders on how to prevent and separate waste, how to reduce/eliminate single use items (D9c-d).

Sustainability and resource conservation are on everyone's lips. This also includes seeing commodities, tools, toys, clothing, furniture, instruments and everything else that is important to us not only as disposable items that can often be easily and cheaply replaced, but also to enhance the value of things by making them repairable and durable.¹⁵⁰

Savings in food resources can be achieved primarily through the use of local and seasonal food, but also with the prevention of food waste. This can be achieved by making regional agriculture and tourism even more interconnected. The existing approaches of some flagship companies as well as the Slow Food Travel Initiative are a good starting point for an increased use of regional food in gastronomy and accommodation.¹⁵¹

The Waste Management Association of Western Carinthia distinguishes between plastic packaging and plastic non-packaging when it comes to used and recycled materials (see find information about plastic packaging); suggestions for avoiding plastic.¹⁵² The website page of the Municipality of Hermagor describes a campaign with kindergarten kids in order to prevent waste.¹⁵³

The provision of a collection and recycling system, with at least four streams (i.e. organic, paper, metal, glass and plastic) is described in the website page of Abfallwirtschaftverband (AWV) Westkärnten, provides a list of the collection and recycling streams managed by the company (D9e).¹⁵⁴ The Collection Calendar of the Municipality of Hermagor shows how waste is disposed and collected separately throughout the year (D9h).¹⁵⁵ On the website of the municipality of Hermagor

¹⁴⁷ The Waste Management Association of Western Carinthia - Mission statement and tasks:

<http://www.awvwestkaernten.at/en/ueber-uns/leitbild-aufgaben>

¹⁴⁸ The Waste Management Association of Western Carinthia - Biogenic waste:

<http://www.awvwestkaernten.at/en/trennen-entsorgen/biogene-abfaelle>

¹⁴⁹ Environmental Consulting – AWW: <http://www.awvwestkaernten.at/en/ueber-uns/umweltberatung>; also see (<http://www.awvwestkaernten.at/en/abfallvermeidung>). For example: Our offer in the field of environmental advice - AWW; Avoiding waste and protecting the environment in everyday life - AWW

¹⁵⁰ Reparaturführer.at: Find repair stores in Carinthia – AWW: <http://www.awvwestkaernten.at/en/awv-aktuell/140-reparaturfuehrer-at-reparaturbetriebe-in-kaernten-finden>

¹⁵¹ See Slow Food Travel Region

¹⁵² Plastic packaging and non packaging: <http://www.awvwestkaernten.at/en/trennen-entsorgen/alt-wertstoffe/kunststoff-nichtverpackung>; how to avoid plastic:

<http://www.awvwestkaernten.at/en/abfallvermeidung/abfallvermeidung>

¹⁵³ Waste prevention in schools: <https://www.hermagor.at/kindergaerten/kiga-pressegger-see/neuigkeiten/article/muellvermeidung/>

¹⁵⁴ Separate waste collection: <http://www.awvwestkaernten.at/en/trennen-entsorgen>

¹⁵⁵ Collection calendar – Abfuhrkalender:

https://hermagor.at/fileadmin/user_upload/DownloadsFormulare/Muellabfuhrtermine_2021.pdf

there are all the contacts for the waste collection center.¹⁵⁶ Finally, the website describes the Müll App developed by SYMVARO GmbH and adopted by AWV in order to make the waste disposal and collection easier (**D9h**).¹⁵⁷

For the provision of a sustainable system for the disposal of residual waste (D9f), the KEM workshop included ideas and concrete project proposals, including one to develop, under the motto "Holidays from waste", measures to help prevent waste and reduce waste in tourism and leisure activities. The issue of waste is prominent in several of the measures proposed, i.e., the "10 golden rules for the guest" are a one-sided graphic for the enterprises. It encourages to:

- Waste avoidance at events
- Public relations and information campaigns
- Guest information
- Waste consultations for businesses
- Green events.

Campaigns to eliminate dropping of litter, including by visitors, and to keep public spaces clean have been carried out (**D9h**). In the kindergarten of Hermagor, all children who are new in the kindergarten receive a snack box to avoid waste.¹⁵⁸ Also, together with Tibet Hilfe Gailtal, nature was freed from the garbage lying around on September 19, 2020.

D10. GHG emissions and climate change mitigation: The destination has targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implements and reports on mitigation policies and actions. Enterprises are encouraged to measure, monitor, reduce or minimise, publicly report and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including from suppliers and service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged.

The destination Nassfeld-Pressegger See – Lesachtal – Weissensee is taking part in the first tender for the project "Most Sustainable Tourism Region". Within the scope of this tender an implementation concept was developed. This concept includes various topics on sustainability, including emissions reduction. For example, of CO2 equivalents per year broken down by use in the region are identified in the field of mobility, where a number of initiatives are proposed to increase public mobility D10a).¹⁵⁹

D11. Low-impact transportation: The destination has targets to reduce transport emissions from travel to and within the destination. An increase in the use of sustainable, low-emissions vehicles and public transport and active travel (e.g., walking and cycling) is sought in order to reduce the contribution of tourism to air pollution, congestion and climate change.

Investment in more sustainable transport infrastructure, including public transport and low emissions vehicles (**D11a**). The destination Nassfeld-Pressegger See – Lesachtal – Weissensee is taking part in the first tender for the project "Most Sustainable Tourism Region". Within the scope of this tender an implementation concept was developed. This concept includes various topics on sustainability, including mobility D.11. Results of Participatory Workshop in Hermagor /23.07.2020) on mobility with TARGETS for 2023 for: 1. Digitization & recording of timetables on Google Transit and other platforms; 2. Use of hydrogen buses in regular services. Gradual conversion of regional buses to sustainable resources. 3. Inexpensive season or annual tickets for locals or seasonal workers or mobility partner companies. 4. Public relations and awareness raising. In the report it indicates how use of public transit sits at 3% in the destination and 6% in Weissensee (p.52).¹⁶⁰

Information promoted to visitors on alternative transport options to and within the destination (**D11b-f**). This page informs guests about travel possibilities and public transport in the habitat Nassfeld-Pressegger See.¹⁶¹ "With the Guest Card Basic and the +CARD holiday, guests can use the regional public transport system free of charge (Arnoldstein - Obertilliach). Every guest in the habitat Nassfeld-Pressegger See receives the Guest Card Basic upon arrival. Guests from partner companies receive the +CARD holiday (Box 11).¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Waste collection center: <https://www.hermagor.at/servicestellen/umweltservice/sammelzentrum/>

¹⁵⁷ Müll App: <https://muellapp.com/>

¹⁵⁸ Snack box for kindergarten Children: <https://www.hermagor.at/kindergaerten/kiga-pressegger-see/neuigkeiten/article/muellvermeidung/>

¹⁵⁹ KEM Masterplan (p. 72-75) Vision, strategy and goals

¹⁶⁰ KEM Masterplan (p. 50-56) Mobility and M6 "Reduce car-free holidays/traffic" (p. 125)

¹⁶¹ Arrival & mobility in the habitat Nassfeld-Pressegger See: www.nassfeld.at/mobilitaet

¹⁶² Guest CARD basic / +CARD holiday and mobility: <https://www.nassfeld.at/en/Service/Anreise-Mobilitaet>

Box 11. Best practice: +CARD holiday

The GuestCard Basic is provided for every guest. The +CARD holiday is provided for guests from premium partners. In the summer, the **+Card holiday** is provided to visitors who spend at least one night at one of the 150 premium partner businesses, between 16 May and 4 October 2020. The card allows use of regional public transportation, free use of the summer cable cars and lifts in the Nassfeld region, admission to the bathing lido at Pressegger See, access to exclusive hiking, biking and kids programme and discounts of up to 30 % on various leisure activities and offers

In the winter, the WinterCard PREMIUM is provided to visitors of more than 180 PREMIUM partners in the Nassfeld-Pressegger See region. It gives access to: reduced rates for ski passes, discounted price at the ski depot by the valley station of the Millennium-Express cable car, reduced prices for ski and equipment rental for kids and adults, ski passes available at reception (at select partner businesses), free express ski service at Kofelcenter Madritsche and discounts on the guided weekly winter programme in the World of Mountains & Lakes.

As a holder of the +CARD holiday, visitors automatically benefit from all the same services and discounts available with the GuestCard Basic.

Improvement and promotion of cycling and walking opportunities (**D11d**): "The region offers bike buses in cooperation with the mobile office. There is a separate timetable for this. The registration for the bike bus is done by phone via the mobile office. In the summer months, there is also a guided bike tour to Venzone with return transport. The registration for this tour can be done via the Info- und Service Center Nassfeld-Pressegger See. With the +CARD holiday this offer is free of charge. The region also offers in cooperation with the mobile office Almshuttle to certain mountain pastures. There is a separate timetable for this. The registration for the Almshuttle is done by telephone via the mobile office. In the summer months, the Almshuttle is also included in the weekly hiking program.

The Kem Masterplan identifies the neighbouring regions that can reach the destination with the bus.¹⁶³ Regularly farmer markets take place in Hermagor and Tröpolach. These markets can be reached by public transport, even though there is currently no special offer for this. However, this could be considered for the future (**D11e**).

Box 12. Best practice: FReD "Prima fürs Klima" an innovative e-Carsharing concept

FReD "Prima fürs Klima" is the innovative e-Carsharing concept of the Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee region, which was launched in 2017. Started as LEADER project "Marketing and Awareness Raising e-Carsharing Region Hermagor" and submitted via the association of municipalities, it focuses on joint e-mobility. The e-Autos come from resident enterprises. The participating communities and companies provide the parking spaces including charging stations and also commit themselves to a minimum usage. But not only these "regular customers" can access the FReD fleet. It is always available to residents and guests.

D12. Light and noise pollution: The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.

Light and noise nuisances are specified for hotels in the trade regulations (**D12a**). These can be found on the website of the WKO Kärnten. For private landlords the regulation of the district authority applies (**D12b**).¹⁶⁴ The noise protection ordinance regulates the "reasonable noise excitation" in the municipality of Hermagor. Citizens report to the citizen service, to the municipality or directly to the police (**D12c**).¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ KEM Masterplan Local and regional public transport (p. 49-50)

¹⁶⁴ Operating permit and operator obligations: <https://www.wko.at/service/umwelt-energie/betriebsanlagengenehmigung-betreiberpflichten.html>

¹⁶⁵ Regulation on noise excitation: https://www.hermagor.at/ViewerJS/#../uploads/pics/MX-4141N_20151218_092009.pdf

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