



## Introduction the case study

The nature park Jauerling-Wachau is a protected area along the Danube river in Lower Austria, within the wider Wachau cultural landscape region, a UNESCO Heritage site. The nature park Jauerling-Wachau was created in 1984. Covering about 11,500 ha, the area encloses parts of seven communities, Maria Laach, Emmersdorf, Aggsbach-Markt, Mühldorf, Spitz, Weiten and Raxendorf. The park is administrated by the 'Naturparkverein Jauerling-Wachau', an association co-founded by the seven communities.

The nature park category (in German: Naturpark) is one of the categories of protected areas in Austria, and Jauerling-Wachau is one of currently 48 nature parks in Austria, covering a total area of 500.000 ha. 21 of these nature parks are located in Lower Austria.

Nature parks are protected cultural landscapes that seek to promote the sustainable interaction between people and nature. They are to fulfil four major functions – protection, recreation, education and regional development – in an equal way, and lead to sustainable development where conservation, agriculture and tourism go hand in hand. The main regulatory frameworks for most parts of the management of the nature park Jauerling-Wachau are the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive of NATURA 2000. As in Austria nature protection falls into the federal states (Bundesländer) competence and each federal state has adopted its own Nature Protection Laws (Naturschutzgesetz), the two EU Directives have been translated into the federal state law accordingly. In the case of the nature park Jauerling-Wachau, the applicable law is the 'Niederösterreichisches Naturschutzgesetz' (§9, Abs. 3 and 4).

A central instrument that supports farmers in implementing and complying with environmental protection and land use aims and regulations is contractual nature conservation (Vertragsnaturschutz). Contractual nature conservation is based on the principles of Voluntariness; Cooperation, by involving farmers in the decision how their land is managed; and Financial support to cover related costs or compensate for income losses.

## The case study in a nutshell

**Established:** 1984

**UNESCO status acknowledged:** wider Wachau region (where the park is part of): 2000

**Total area:** 115km<sup>2</sup> (11500 ha)

**Administrative districts:** Krems, Melk, Niederösterreich (Lower Austria)

**Cities and villages:** the nature park encloses parts of 7 communities: Maria Laach, Emmersdorf, Aggsbach-Markt, Mühldorf, Spitz, Weiten and Raxendorf

## Biodiversity and ecosystem services

The park's landscape is marked by the Danube, as well as by hills and valleys, offering a rich biodiversity and providing habitats for rare orchids, butterflies, fish, birds, and other species.

The rich fauna includes more than 100 butterfly species, rare bird species (such as peregrine falcon, black stork, eagle owl, kingfisher or hoopoe), over 50 fish species, insects and reptiles. Flora is particularly rich in orchids with more than 30 species. A central focus of environmental protection in the park is placed on the maintenance and conservation of the species-rich dry grasslands and sloping meadows.

## Agriculture and other economic activities

Agricultural production concerns mainly wine and fruit (apricot) production, as well as some dairy farming. Farming is rather small scale partly conventional and intensive, and partly organic and extensive. In the wider Wachau region, vineyards cover some 1400 ha of the area, and there are some 100.000 apricot trees. Over the last years, the area has become Austria's most important producer of Christmas trees, with some 500 ha used for this purpose. More than half of the area is covered by forests of which some is owned and managed by the Austrian Federal Forest (Österreichische Bundesforste) and some belongs to the Abbey of Göttweig (Stift Göttweig). Although located within the nature parks area, forests of ÖBF and Göttweig are not part of the NATURA 2000 network.

Tourism presents another central economic activity, as the park is located in an important tourist region. There are hiking trails of a total length of 350 km, and in winter, there is a 500m-ski slope. Since 2005, a number of initiatives have been set to increase the number of tourists coming to the Park. The goal is to raise the number of visitors to about 200.000 per year.

### ES delivery

ES delivery essentially relates to provisioning services (wine, fruits, Christmas trees, timber) and cultural services (tourism), given the park's location in the wider Wachau region which is an important tourist area.

### Demography

The nature park Jauerling-Wachau includes parts of seven communities that have a total of some 8250 people: Aggsbach Markt (423), Emmersdorf (1730), Maria Laach (960), Mühldorf (1367), Raxendorf (1043), Spitz (1635) und Weiten (1100). Since the last four communities are only partly located in the nature park, the number of inhabitants living within the park boundaries is between 5000 and 6000 people.

### Governance models

Different approaches are applied for the governance of the environment and Ecosystem Services in the nature park Jauerling-Wachau. These include command and control-based governance approaches that come in particular in form of laws, rules and regulations at the EU, national and state level; market-based governance approaches such as several labels

(‘Gütesiegel’) or initiatives from producer associations; and collaborative governance approaches that are mainly local and community-based initiatives.

Natura 2000 habitats and birds directives and the water framework directive at EU level, and their translation into state law with the ‘Niederösterreichisches Naturschutzgesetz’ (§ 9 Abs. 3 and 4) are most important as regards command-and-control-based governance. ÖPUL (Austrian Agri-Environmental Programme) includes a variety of agri-political support measures within the Austrian environmental policy and landscape management and is co-funded by the EU, the federal government and the states. It is meant to reconcile agricultural production with environmental protection and social and rural development goals and to support and govern voluntary agri-environmental measures.

### GIS data and maps

- Open access data (general, Austria): <https://www.data.gv.at/suche/?sort=abc>
- GIS Data of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Environment (BMLFUW): <http://www.bmlfuw.gv.at/geo-informationen.html>
- Maps and aerial material (Lower Austria): <http://atlas.noe.gv.at/webgisatlas>
- GIS Data (Lower Austria): <http://www.noe.gv.at/Land-Zukunft/Karten-Geoinformation.html>
- Geoland Austria: <http://geoland.at>

## Impressum

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Text: A. Meyer, G. Giersch

Layout: C. Sattler

Picture credits: A. Meyer, G. Giersch

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cp<sup>3</sup> has three project partners:



Leibniz-Centre of Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF)



Organisation for International Dialogue and Conflict Management (IDC)



Wageningen University, Department of Environmental Sciences (WUR)

Contact info project coordination:

Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF)

Eberswalder Strasse 84 |

15374 Müncheberg | Germany

E: [cp3@zalf.de](mailto:cp3@zalf.de) | W: [www.cp3-project.eu](http://www.cp3-project.eu)