

## CASE STUDY AT-3

# MOUNTAIN FORESTRY AND PUBLIC GOODS IN THE REGION PINZGAU (AUSTRIA)

### BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

- The **mountain region Pinzgau** is part of the federal province of Salzburg. The district covers an area of 2,640 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to 84,964 inhabitants in 28 municipalities.
- The total forest area is **118,000 ha** of which around **43.9% is dedicated protection forest**.
- Mountain forests (esp. protection forests) play a crucial role in **protecting people, permanent human settlements and infrastructure** in Alpine settings.
- The environmental and social benefits in this case study are: (i) Securing the **protective function of forests against natural hazards** (floods, mudslides and landslides) and (ii) enhancing **social and economic vitality** (including ecological stability) of the region.



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### KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

In order to **incentivize a sufficient provision of environmental and social benefits** through mountain forestry, the Austrian legislation developed various mechanisms (as early as 1852). Consequently, **most drivers are public policy driven** and are either directly or indirectly geared towards strengthening the protection function. The **Austrian Forest Act** and **regional regulation on protection forest** are the central controlling instruments. The regional regulations of the **Act on Game Keeping**, the **Nature Protection Law** and the rules of the **spatial planning system** are further important regulations. Control at all three administrative levels (municipality, region and federal province, as well as national level) is decisive. In terms of financial support, around 5.5 Mio. Euro of **forest related support measures** have been granted by the European Union within the Rural Development Programme (2007-2013) in the case study area of which 1.5 Mio. Euro were specifically geared towards the **regeneration of protection forests** and the **conservation of the protection function**.

### EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS



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- **Local population puts pressure on political bodies** which have to take action (development of plans, technical and financial support schemes) for securing relevant environmental and social benefits.
- **The Austrian Forest Act and the Rural Development Programme** is a useful model for incentivising good silvicultural practices (for mountain forestry).
- Yet, some degree of **conflicting interests** between stakeholders remain: **Damage caused by game animals** as well as **support measures for alpine pastures** ('clearance' of forests) are identified as major factors negatively impacting the protection function.
- **Climate change** and the increase of natural hazard incidents will likely aggravate the **challenges for protective mountain forests**.

