

## CASE STUDY AT-2

# SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS IN THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE LUNGAU, SALZBURG (AUSTRIA)

### BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

- **The Biosphere Reserve Lungau (BR)** was established only in 2012. The BR is spread over two federal states (Salzburg and Carinthia) with a **total area of over 1000 km<sup>2</sup>**. It is thus the youngest and largest BR of Austria. The present study is limited to the Lungau part in the federal state of Salzburg.
- The entire Lungau district is defined as **mountain area** and **almost 50% of all farms are managed organically**. There is also a strong focus on **all season tourism**.
- The prevailing features of cultural landscapes **would inevitably disappear** without specific traditional land management systems.
- Therefore, the Biosphere Reserve Lungau is a typical example for the development of the **specific Alpine cultural landscapes** with a **high environmental quality**.
- The **main environmental and social benefits** provided in the case study are: (i) **biodiversity**, (ii) the **protection and maintenance of the prevailing Alpine and cultural landscape character** and (iii) its **contribution to an active and socially resilient rural community (rural vitality)**.



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

The **provision of environmental and social benefits** in the case study Lungau is particularly **shaped by the designation as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve** (since 2012). Although this international recognition **does not entail any (financial) support instruments** (financial support has to come from various national authorities, e.g. municipalities or other regional development programmes, e.g. LEADER), an effective use of the **BR concept requires particular management practices** (e.g. zoning schemes, integrating cultural and biological diversity). Implementation is led by the cross-sectoral objectives of sustainable resource management of the BR and **encourages an increased local involvement and engagement in scientific accompanying activities**. The **main policy instrument** providing the largest share of financial support is the **Common Agricultural Policy**. In particular, the high proportion for mountain farming under **Pillar 2** (agri-environmental measures, support for organic farming, and the Compensatory Allowances schemes for areas with natural constraints) underpin the high commitment at national and regional level for securing environmental and social benefits linked to mountain farming and sustaining rural vitality (since long).

### EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The BR concept is a comprehensive framework for **balancing nature protection and economic development**. It offers and requests ample room for **participation**, with potentially positive impacts on environmental and social benefits provision.
- There are **divergent views** of the role of the BR among actors (**conservation versus development**) creating (hidden) conflicts.
- The policy framework in place is still strongly driven by **CAP, with pillar 2** comprising the most significant contributions to the provision of environmental and social benefits (biodiversity, cultural landscape, rural vitality).
- **Main challenge of BR:** Reconcile diverse interests, communication processes and increased participation (with limited financial means).



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